

Gingivostomatitis

What is herpetic gingivostomatitis?

Herpetic gingivostomatitis is an infection of the mouth and lips that is caused by a virus. It most commonly affects toddlers and young children, although older individuals can also get this infection.



What is the cause?

Herpetic gingivostomatitis is caused by a type of virus called herpes simplex virus type 1 or HSV1.

The infection is passed from person to person through contact with saliva that contains the virus (such as sharing utensils, cups, and bottles; thumb sucking; and putting toys in the mouth). Often the contact is with a person who has cold sores.

What are the symptoms?

The illness usually begins with a fever before the first mouth sores appear. Sores in the mouth and fluid filled blisters may form on the lips, gums, tongue, and cheeks. Often the gums are very red, swollen, and bleed easily. There may also be severe mouth pain. Children may have poor appetites or will not eat or drink.

Your child may need to stay home from day care or school until the sores and swelling are gone due to the infection being easily transmittable to others.

How is it diagnosed?

This condition is common and will be recognized by your healthcare provider without doing any special tests.

How long does it last?

The fever usually lasts for a few days. The painful mouth sores last 3 to 5 days before they start to get better. It will take about 14 days before the sores completely heal. After the mouth sores heal, the virus remains in the body and can become active again. When this happens, usually the sores are not as severe. Sores that return on the lips are called "cold sores."

Should you have any questions, please call us: 905-709-3888