



Herpes Viruses Association

Registered charity 291657

41 North Road London N7 9DP
Office Tel: 020 7607 9661 Helpline: 0845 123 2305
e-mail: marian@herpes.org.uk

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Ash Communications
Healthcare
TEL: +44 (0) 20 7734 5666

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“Around The Lips - Or Below The Hips”

Herpes Viruses Association British 10K London Runners Highlight Increasing Oral Sex Problem

Runners supporting the Herpes Viruses Association (HVA) charity in the fifth annual British 10K London Run on Sunday 3 July 2005 will display the slogan ‘Around the lips or below the hips’ on t-shirts to highlight the increase in ‘genital cold sores’ from oral sex. Other t-shirts read ‘His’n’herp’s’.



More than half of all new diagnoses are now caused by herpes simplex type one, the virus that gives you facial cold sores. This trend away from genital infection caused by herpes simplex type two is particularly marked in people below the age of 25 – the group with the highest rate of new infection.^{1,2,3}

Marian Nicholson, director of HVA, says: “The increase is worrying as people don’t realise that a cold sore can be passed on by both kissing and oral sex. In recent years, a reduction in the incidence of

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facial infection in early adolescence has left people susceptible to genital cold sores. They simply need to abstain from oral sex when a cold sore appears.”

One of the smallest charities entering the run, the HVA, is raising funds for its helpline – contacted each year by 5,000 people who are often distressed or suicidal.

“People often feel that a diagnosis of genital herpes is the end of their sex life and need the support of people who can help them understand about the condition. Around 70% of the UK population carries herpes simplex virus type one or two and most have symptoms so mild that they are never diagnosed. Our helpliners put their genital cold sores into context for them.”

Advice on all aspects of herpes simplex and its treatments as well as other herpes viruses, such as chickenpox, shingles and glandular fever, are available from The Herpes Viruses Association Website: <http://www.herpes.org.uk>. People affected by the stigma or who simply want to know more can contact the helpline: 0845 123 2305.

For further information, please contact:
Sandie Lowery or Kate Wynne
Ash Communications Healthcare
15-19 Great Chapel Street
London W1F 8FN
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7734 5666
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7734 9666
E-mail sandie@ashcommunications.com

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

¹ Scoular et al. Longitudinal study of genital infection by herpes simplex virus type 1 in Western Scotland over 15 years. *BMJ* 2002; 324:1366-7.

² Patel et al. Advising patients with genital herpes *BMJ* 1997;314:85-86

³ PHLS Communication 2003: In 2003, 17,932 new cases of genital herpes recorded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

⁴ Vyse et al. The Burden of infection with HSV-1 and HSV-2 in England and Wales: implications for the changing epidemiology of genital herpes. *Sex Trans Inf* 2000;76:182-7.

The Herpes Viruses Association exists to promote better mental and physical health with regard to the family of herpes viruses. Its aims are:

1. To provide information to the public, to medical professionals and to the media.
2. To encourage the development of new treatments for herpes simplex.
3. To tackle stigma and the unnecessary trauma associated with the condition

As well as treatment advice, the HVA runs a helpline, which provides emotional support and advice to many people diagnosed with genital herpes or facial cold sores every year.

Helpline for the general public: 0845 123 23051 and Website: <http://www.herpes.org.uk>