



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health To Expand Screening Tests for Genital Herpes
Beginning December 4, All Sexually Transmitted Disease
Clinics to Offer the Blood Test

A new service will soon be available at all Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinics of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. Beginning Monday, December 4, 2006, Public Health will offer herpes serologic (blood) testing during all STD clinics.

Public Health STD clinics are offered on a walk-in basis on Tuesdays from 1-5 p.m. and Thursdays, 9-11 a.m. & 1-3 p.m. at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Main Office, 710 N. Neil St., in Champaign. An STD Clinic for men only is also available at the same location from 4-6 p.m. every Monday. For more information about these clinics, contact the Division of Infectious Disease Prevention & Management at (217) 239-7827.

Herpes simplex virus (HSV) is extremely common in the United States. Approximately 45 million people, ages 12 and older (or, one out of five adolescents and adults) have a genital HSV infection.

Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the herpes simplex viruses type 1 (HSV-1) and type 2 (HSV-2). Most genital herpes is caused by HSV-2. Most individuals have no or only minor signs or symptoms from HSV-1 or HSV-2 infection, and thus do not know they are infected, and can spread this disease to other partners. HSV is treatable, but not curable.

Genital herpes can cause recurrent painful genital sores in many adults, and herpes infection can be severe in people with suppressed immune systems.

Genital HSV can also cause potentially fatal infections in babies. It is important that women avoid contracting herpes during pregnancy because a first episode during pregnancy causes a greater risk of transmission to the baby. If a woman has active genital herpes at delivery, a cesarean delivery is usually performed. Fortunately, infection of a baby from a woman with herpes infection is rare.

Herpes may play a role in the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Herpes can make people more susceptible to HIV infection, and it can make HIV-infected individuals more infectious.

The blood test can differentiate between HSV-1 and HSV-2, and also can detect the virus – even in the absence of any physical symptoms. The cost for the test is \$34.

Anyone with positive test results who is experiencing an outbreak of genital herpes may receive medications from Public Health free of charge (there is a \$20 suggested donation).

Test results are available within 1 week.

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