



## GENITAL HERPES AND PREGNANCY

If you had herpes prior to the beginning of this pregnancy, you are a good candidate for home birth, especially if you do not have signs or symptoms of an outbreak at the time you go into labor. If you have an initial outbreak of herpes with an active lesion during the last few weeks of pregnancy and/or during labor, it is more likely that the baby could contract the virus causing serious health problems. If you have an active outbreak at the time you are in labor, a cesarean birth may be the safest choice for the baby's health, but a vaginal birth may be possible or even desirable. We will discuss options and encourage you to make informed choices about the birth. The best thing to do is focus on preventing outbreaks when you are at or near your due date. Outbreak prevention strategies and treatment options are listed below. If you feel an outbreak coming on or you notice lesions, please let your midwife know as soon as possible. Take confidence in the knowledge that infection rates in babies are extremely low and most women with herpes are able to have vaginal births.

- As with most things in pregnancy, maintaining optimal nutrition is your best defense. It is especially important to make sure you are well nourished during periods of increased stress.
- Do what you can to decrease stress in your life – get plenty of rest, go for peaceful walks, meditate, get a massage, take a bath – anything that helps you relax and enjoy being pregnant.
- Eat foods rich in lysine, an amino acid that can help suppress herpes outbreaks. Lysine-rich foods include eggs, yogurt, sour cream, fish, and poultry. You can also take L-lysine capsules 2000mg/day (don't take with dairy, vitamins B & C improve absorption). Other helpful foods include miso, brown rice, tofu, tempeh, and most vegetables.
- The herpes virus is supported by the amino acid arginine. Avoid arginine-forming foods such as caffeine, nuts, and chocolate. You may want to reduce your intake of sweets, alcohol, refined carbohydrates, corn, tomatoes, gelatin desserts, legumes, hard cheeses, and red meat.
- Consider taking 2 Kyolic (odorless garlic) capsules per day, increasing the dose to 6-8 capsules a day during times of added stress (unless you feel an outbreak coming on – see below)
- Take bee propolis tincture 15 drops, 3 times a day
- Support your immune system by vigorously massaging with the tips of your fingers the vertical area along your sternum at least once a day (stimulates thymus)
- Cut back on smoking (tobacco and/or marijuana) if you haven't stopped completely.
- Visualize the virus remaining dormant in the nerves at the base of your spine, it's happy to just sleep there and doesn't need to come down and get busy
- You can take prescription Acyclovir or Valtrex during the last month of the pregnancy

If you feel an outbreak coming on, in addition to continuing with preventative measures and calling your midwife, here are some things to try which can prevent an outbreak and/or reduce the severity and strength of symptoms:

- Take some time off to rest and care for yourself
- If you think an outbreak is coming on, immediately take 12 Kyolic capsules, then take 3 capsules every 4 hours while you are awake for 3 days
- Take echinacea tincture: 1 dropper full, 5 times a day for 10 days. **Do not use echinacea that is mixed with goldenseal.**
- Increase your L-lysine to 5000 mg per day.
- Take chelated zinc, starting with 25 mg after meals, and building up to 300 mg per day over a few days
- Increase your intake of vitamin C and B-complex vitamins.
- When you first feel tingling, you can apply ice to the site where the tingling occurs
- Apply L-lysine cream or essential oil of tea tree directly to sores to speed healing
- A warm Epsom salt bath can soothe itching and pain
- During an outbreak, avoid: eating citrus fruits, wearing underwear that are not 100% cotton, sexual activity involving affected areas