

cold sores

Cold sores are the result of a viral infection otherwise known as Herpes Simplex. Symptoms consist of itching, burning blisters, usually on the lips but may also be inside the mouth or nostrils or on the chin or cheeks. After the blisters break there may be a crusty area of broken skin that can lead to secondary infection.

The usual potential triggers for cold sores are stress, fatigue, hormonal changes, emotional trauma, sun exposure and a generally weakened immune system.

Prompt use of indicated remedies at the first hint of symptoms may reduce the duration of the outbreak and often the episodes become less frequent.

The following remedies are the most commonly used for acute symptoms; if episodes persist or are severe then a consultation with a homoeopath is recommended.

Apis is a specific remedy that acts on cellular tissues to relieve edema of skin. Relieves tingling, sensitivity, soreness and burning of the skin.

Arsenicum is suggested for chronic symptoms with swelling of skin eruptions. The blisters are itchy and burning with cutting pain; they are worse from cold and eating shellfish and may ulcerate. There is often great thirst for frequent small sips and the person is restless and chilly.

Cantharis is indicated for large blisters that smart, burn intensely and may bleed. The cold sore feels sore and worse from touch; however burning pain is the main guiding symptom.

Hepar sulph for cold sores that develop pus, are slow to heal and are very sensitive to touch. The individual often feels oversensitive and irritable and is aggravated by drafts.

Nat mur is one of the most common remedies and if taken at the first sign of tingling and burning it may prevent or shorten an episode. Start with 3-4 doses a day. **Nat mur** is often indicated for skin disturbances and can relieve dry and cracked corners of the mouth and when cold sores begin to crack and bleed. Fever blisters or watery, pearl like blisters on the lips or inside the nose, that are puffy and burning. They may appear with a cold, sun exposure or after an emotional upset and can be accompanied by a deep crack in the middle of the lower lip.

Rhus tox can be an effective remedy for ulcerated corners of mouth and fever-blisters around mouth and chin. The fluid within the vesicles is generally coloured, as opposed to **Nat mur** that has clear water. It can promote a crusting of the sore and dry it



up. For relief of red, swollen and intense itching of skin. Relieves burning eruptions with tendency to scale formation.

Sepia for cold sores with swelling and cracking of the lower lip. The blisters and sores may be on the lips or around the mouth and nose, with an itching, tingling sensation. Symptoms often appear in lethargic women especially during pregnancy, menses or menopause. The sores are better for hot applications.

As well as the above-mentioned triggers, foods high in the amino acid arginine may also trigger cold sore outbreaks. Arginine-rich foods include nuts, seeds, grains and chocolate; therefore avoiding these foods during an outbreak may improve healing time. Increasing intake of Vitamin C, Lysine and Zinc can help reduce the duration of an outbreak.

Finding ways to better manage your stressors such as regular exercise and quiet meditation are important considerations also.

Homoeopathic Cold Sore Balm: This balm contains the following remedies: **Arsenicum**, **Calendula**, **Hepar sulph**, **Nat mur**, **Rhus tox** and **Sepia** and can help relieve symptoms. For best results apply the balm at the very first hint of cold sore activity. Cold sores are extremely contagious and it is easy to infect others. It is better to use a cotton bud to apply the balm so as not to contaminate the product.