

Dendritic Keratitis (Herpes Simplex Keratitis)

This material will help you understand dendritic keratitis, or Herpes Simplex keratitis, and how to manage it.

What is Herpes Simplex (dendritic) keratitis?

Herpes Simplex keratitis occurs when the Type I Herpes Simplex virus infects the cornea. The Type I Herpes Simplex virus is the same virus that causes cold sores around the mouth and nose, which are very common. This is different than the Type II Herpes Simplex virus that causes sexually transmitted herpes. Most people contract Type I Herpes Simplex as children when they come into contact with an adult who has a cold sore. The virus lives in nerve cells of the skin or eye and can occasionally re-activate. The reasons for this re-activation are unknown. Some believe that stress or an illness can bring on a re-activation.

When Type 1 Herpes re-activates as cold sores, it is contagious. When Type I Herpes Simplex re-activates in the eye and causes keratitis, it is not contagious.

Keratitis means inflammation of the cornea. The cornea is the clear window on the outside of the eye. Therefore, Herpes Simplex keratitis occurs when the virus causes corneal inflammation. This inflammation can cause blurred vision, eye pain, redness and light sensitivity.

How is Herpes Simplex keratitis treated?

The most common treatment for Herpes Simplex keratitis is either an oral or a topical antiviral medication. Sometimes, your doctor may need to scrape off the inflamed area from the cornea to help the healing process.

Your eye doctor will discuss which treatment is best for you.

For more information, scan this code with your smartphone or visit the website listed.



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/herpes-keratitis-treatment.cfm>

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