

FEVER BLISTERS, COLD SORES: (Herpes labialis)

Signs & Symptoms: Clear vesicles (sores) usually involving the face and lips, which crust and heal within a few days. These lesions represent reactivation of a latent infection which in most cases was unnoticed, and occurred early in life.

Infectious Agent: A virus: Herpesvirus Type I (HSV1).

Mode of Spread: Direct contact with saliva of infected persons: infection is extremely commonplace-most adults have experienced infection with this virus during early childhood.

Incubation Period: Two to twelve days.

Period of Communicability: Virus remains in saliva for as long as seven weeks following recovery from lesion.

Remarks and Control Measures: There is no value in excluding students with cold sores from school. No specific control measures are available; personal hygiene and avoiding crowding in classrooms will reduce person-to-person contact.

Differentiate between this condition and impetigo

Nancy Dube
School Nurse Consultant
Department of Education
624-6694/Nancy.Dube@maine.gov