

Cold Sores: Patient Information Leaflet

If you suffer from cold sores, it is important to tell your practitioner who may prescribe medicines, in advance of treatment, to help reduce your risk of getting a cold sore while you are healing.

Before and after treatment try to avoid trigger factors such as ultraviolet light (the sun or sun beds), physical or emotional stress, fatigue, fever, menstruation, immunosuppression, extremes in temperature, mouth or lip trauma and dental or surgical procedures. If sunlight is a trigger, use sunscreen or sunblock and lip balm (sun protection factor 15 or greater), to help reduce recurrent episodes.

Prophylactic treatment cannot always prevent cold sores occurring, if you have any symptoms, please advise your cosmetic practitioner and take the following precautions to prevent transmission to others and to prevent it spreading:

- Avoid touching the lesions.
- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after touching the lesions.
- Avoid kissing and oral sex until lesions have fully healed.
- Do not share items that come into contact with lesions (e.g. lipstick or lip balm, face towels).
- Topical preparations should be dabbed on to minimise mechanical trauma to the lesions.
- Take care if using contact lenses, as there is a risk of transmission to the eye.
- Defer dental treatment until the lesions have fully healed.

Seek medical advice if your symptoms worsen (for example the lesion spreads, new lesions develop, or there is persistent fever or difficulty taking fluids), or no significant improvement is seen after 5-7 days.

The British Herpes Association gives helpful advice and information:

www.herples.org.uk