

Herpes/HSV: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Recurrent viral infection of the skin or mucous membranes characterized by the appearance of single or multiple clusters of small blisters (vesicles) on a reddened base, frequently occurring about the mouth (herpes gingivostomatitis), lips (herpes labialis), genitals (herpes genitalis), and conjunctiva and cornea (herpes keratoconjunctivitis). Incubation period two to twelve days, averaging six to seven. Regional lymph nodes may be tender and swollen. Outbreak recurrences may follow minor infections, trauma, stress (emotional, dietary, and environmental), and sun exposure.

QUICK REVIEW

- Enhancement of the immune status is key to the prevention and control of herpes infection.
- A diet that avoids arginine-rich foods while promoting lysine-rich foods can be quite effective.
- Oral supplementation with zinc (50 mg/day) has been shown to be effective in reducing the frequency, duration, and severity of herpes in clinical studies.
- Both oral consumption and topical application of vitamin C increase the rate of healing of herpes ulcers.
- One of the most widely used topical preparations in the treatment and prevention of herpes outbreaks is a concentrated extract (70:1) of *Melissa officinalis* (lemon balm).

The goal of treatment is to shorten the current attack and prevent recurrences. Support of the immune system is of primary importance. Inhibition of HSV replication through manipulation of the lysine/arginine ratio in the diet seems to be appropriate. This combined approach can be very effective at reducing the frequency, duration, and severity of recurrences.

Diet

Follow a diet that avoids arginine-rich foods while promoting lysine-rich foods. Foods high in arginine are chocolate, peanuts, seeds, and almonds and other nuts. Foods high in lysine include most vegetables, legumes, fish, turkey, and chicken.

Nutritional Supplements

- Vitamin C: 2,000 mg per day
- Bioflavonoids: 1,000 mg per day • Zinc: 30-50 mg per day
- Lysine: 1,000 mg three times per day • Thymus extract: The equivalent of 120 mg of pure polypeptides with molecular weights less than 10,000, or roughly 500 mg of the crude polypeptide fraction per day

Topical Treatment

- Ice: 10 minutes on, 5 minutes off for up to three cycles every 4 hours during initial symptoms
- Zinc sulfate solution: 0.025% solution three times per day
- Melissa cream: apply twice per day
- Glycyrrhetic acid: apply twice per day

Vitamin C Paste for HSV Lesions