

Health Awareness

Preventing Outbreaks: One Woman's Story

(NAPSA)—One in five people have something in common, but they probably don't know it because very few people are talking about it. Fifty million Americans have genital herpes.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts 1 million new cases of genital herpes occur each year, making it the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States.

And, of those who have genital herpes, 90 percent do not even know they are infected with the virus. That is what happened to Gina, who was engaged to be married and had just started a new job when she was diagnosed with the disease.

"When I first found out I had genital herpes, I thought it was a death sentence," Gina recalled. "I felt so devastated and alone. I never expected this could happen to me. After my diagnosis I thought my social and sex life would be ruined forever. All I wanted was support and a convenient treatment that would let me get back to my normal life."

In addition to feeling emotionally isolated, Gina said she experienced severe physical symptoms, including frequent outbreaks of itching, burning, painful open sores and tingling and numbness on the back of her legs. "I was having painful outbreaks that lasted for a week at a time, and I lost my job because of missing so much work."

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What You Should Know

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Of those who have genital herpes, 90 percent do not know they are infected.

Genital herpes is highly contagious.

A million new cases occur each year, making it the most commonly sexually transmitted disease in the U.S.



pes, the virus stays in the body for life. In some people, symptoms may come and go. When symptoms are present, it is referred to as an outbreak. Fortunately, there are treatments available that can help relieve symptoms and may even stop an outbreak from occurring altogether.

Gina said she was better able to manage her outbreaks when her doctor prescribed Famvir® (famciclovir) tablets, which she took every day, year-round, as suppressive therapy. Now, Famvir is approved as a single-day, episodic treatment for recurrent genital herpes (RGH) in healthy patients. Gina said she thinks the Single-Day Famvir treatment is a great new option for RGH.

Doctors say it's important to take Single-Day Famvir at the first sign of an outbreak because this is when the virus is most active. "For many people, taking oral anti-viral medications such as Single-Day Famvir can significantly relieve their symptoms or even stop the outbreak in its tracks," said Dr. Steven K. Tyring,

Professor, Department of Dermatology, University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston, Texas. "This medication is unique in that it's just one day of medication to treat the outbreak."

Today, Gina is stepping out of the shadows to let other sufferers know they are not alone. "I think a lack of education is why there is a negative stigma surrounding genital herpes," she stated.

In fact, she has started her own support group to share her story with the goal of informing other RGH sufferers about the condition and to spread the word about the new, convenient and effective therapies available to them.

She knows that the most important thing to RGH patients when they have an outbreak is to get rid of it as quickly as possible, with the least amount of discomfort and pain as possible.

Gina hopes she can reach out to those living with genital herpes to help them cope with many of the same physical and emotional issues she faced, and maybe they'll inspire another patient with their own story.

"I went through months of pain, embarrassment and shame before I realized that genital herpes could be managed," added Gina. "Once I got my outbreaks under control with medication, I was able to move on with my life."

For more information about Single-Day Famvir, see the full Prescribing Information at <http://www.famvir.com>.



Note to Editor: Famvir (famciclovir) tablets are indicated for the treatment or suppression of recurrent genital herpes in immunocompetent patients; the treatment of recurrent herpes labialis (cold sores) in immunocompetent patients; the treatment of recurrent mucocutaneous herpes simplex infections in HIV-infected patients; and the treatment of acute herpes zoster (shingles).

In clinical trials, the most commonly reported adverse events vs. placebo were headache (zoster: 22.7% vs. 17.8%; episodic: 13.5% vs. 5.4%; suppression: 39.3% vs. 42.9%; cold sores: 9.7% vs. 6.7%); nausea (zoster: 12.5% vs. 11.6%; episodic: 2.5% vs. 3.6%; suppression: 7.2% vs. 9.5%; cold sores: 2.2% vs. 3.9%); and diarrhea (zoster: 7.7% vs. 4.8%; episodic: 4.9% vs. 1.2%; suppression: 9.0% vs. 9.5%; cold sores: 1.8% vs. 0.8%).

The efficacy of Famvir has not been established for initial-episode genital herpes infection, ophthalmic zoster, disseminated zoster, or in immunocompromised patients with herpes zoster. The safety and efficacy of Famvir for suppressive therapy has not been established beyond one year.

There is no cure for genital herpes. There is no evidence that Famvir can stop the spread of herpes to others.

Famvir is Pregnancy Category B. Famvir is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to the product, its components, or Denavir® (penciclovir cream). For more information about Famvir, see the full Prescribing Information at <http://www.famvir.com>.