



# Health Awareness

## Survey Reveals The Taboo Topic Few Want To Discuss

(NAPSA)—When Amy learned she had genital herpes seven years ago, she did not want to let the diagnosis control her life. At the time, Amy was working at a sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinic and had seen firsthand how a diagnosis could affect the way people felt about themselves. A young, vibrant, single woman in her thirties, Amy was not ready for that to happen in her own life so she chose to take action.

“When I was first diagnosed with genital herpes, I struggled with the news. I was happy with my life the way it was and I certainly didn’t want the virus to change my life too much,” said Amy. “I didn’t know how or if I should tell people. All I knew was that I was going to need some encouragement, so I found a local support group that helped me realize my diagnosis did not have to change who I was as a person.”

Amy spoke to her doctor about treatment and found support among her peers. Now, happily married, Amy feels that she—not her genital herpes—is in control of her life. While this sense of control has helped her become comfortable with speaking openly about her condition, a recent survey suggests that patients like Amy may be few and far between. The survey, conducted by Harris Interactive® for Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp., showed that more than one-quarter of survey

### Additional Survey Findings

- Approximately three in five adults (61%) with genital herpes said that revealing their condition to their partner(s) was troubling to them.
- Only about one-third (32%) said they were open about their condition with their close family and friends.



respondents (28 percent) identified genital herpes as a taboo topic to discuss in today’s society, ranking it higher than HIV (20 percent), mental illness (14 percent) and obesity (10 percent).

Dr. Laura Berman, LCSW, Ph.D., director of the Berman Center in Chicago, columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times and star of Showtime’s “Sexual Healing” series, sees many people in her clinic deal with a genital herpes diagnosis.

“In my own practice, I’ve seen the communication challenges that couples can face when the discussion turns to STDs like genital herpes, especially when one or both partners is facing a diagnosis,” said Dr. Berman. “But it’s time that we start confronting the reality of genital herpes as one of the most common yet treatable STDs in the country. There are a variety of resources and treatment options available today that I recommend for my own patients. One option, Single-Day Famvir® (famciclovir) Tablets, can give patients with recurrent genital herpes the opportunity to stop or

shorten an outbreak with just one day of treatment.”

Amy agrees that finding the right treatment and taking advantage of the resources available to her was in part what allowed her to stay in control of her life. Today, Amy wants to encourage others to take control of their own lives as soon as they learn they have genital herpes. “Speaking at support group meetings has helped me take control

### Dr. Berman’s Tips For Talking To Your Partner About Genital Herpes

- Come to terms with your condition
- Be open and honest with your partner before having sex
- Find a neutral setting where you both feel safe and comfortable
- Have educational materials on hand
- Ask your potential partner if he or she has been tested in the past
- Encourage your partner to get tested



of my life, and I think it’s wonderful that people outside of the community are talking about genital herpes as well. This will begin opening the lines of communication about this manageable disease. I hope this renewed interest in educating people about genital herpes will encourage others who have been diagnosed to feel comfortable talking about the virus.”

For more information on genital herpes, please visit [www.genitalherpes.com](http://www.genitalherpes.com).



*Editor’s Note: Full Prescribing Information available at [www.famvir.com](http://www.famvir.com) or by contacting Amy Hunter of Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation at (862) 778-6309 or via e-mail at [amy.hunter@novartis.com](mailto:amy.hunter@novartis.com)*

*About FAMVIR® (famciclovir) Tablets:*

*FAMVIR® (famciclovir) Tablets is a prescription antiviral medicine used for the treatment or suppression of recurrent genital herpes in patients with healthy immune systems.*

*Important Safety Information:*

*FAMVIR is not for people with known allergies to the product, its ingredients or a medicine called Denavir® (penciclovir cream).*

*FAMVIR has not been proven effective for the first genital herpes outbreak. For recurrent herpes outbreaks, FAMVIR should be taken at the first signs or symptoms.*

*Before taking FAMVIR, tell your health care provider if you have kidney problems or are pregnant or nursing.*

*FAMVIR tablets contain lactose. If you have rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, a severe lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption, you should not take FAMVIR tablets.*

*FAMVIR is not a cure for genital herpes. There is no evidence that FAMVIR can stop the spread of herpes to others. If you are sexually active, you can pass herpes to your partner whether or not you have lesions and/or symptoms.*

*If you experience dizziness, drowsiness, confusion or other feelings of disorientation while taking FAMVIR, you should not drive or operate machinery.*

*Safety and effectiveness in children under the age of 18 years has not been demonstrated.*

*In clinical studies, the most common side effects included headache, diarrhea and nausea.*