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& ASSOCIATES | Joining Hands in Women's Wellness

Testing for the Herpes Simplex Virus During Pregnancy

- Genital herpes or cold sores is a disease caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV) type 1 or type 2. Most genital herpes outbreaks are caused by HSV 2; most oral herpes, or cold sores, are caused by HSV 1.
- HSV 1 and 2 can be found in and released from the sores that the virus causes, the virus can be released or “shed” without having a sore present.
- Though HSV 1 and 2 are respective to the area they originate, you can have HSV 2 in your mouth; and you can have HSV 1 in the genital or buttock area.
- Either type of HSV is highly contagious and can be spread with or without the appearance of a sore. It is usually spread by contact whether orally or sexually. But can also be spread by using someone’s towel or washcloth that has been infected.
- You may also have been exposed to HSV 1 and 2 at any time in your life and never show a sign of it.
- HSV can be suppressed by a healthy immune system, however, that does not mean you no longer have the virus. And if the virus is present an outbreak or shedding of the virus could occur at any time. Stress decreases the immune system. Pregnancy not only decreases the immune system, but it is also stressful on the body. Labor can also be stressful.
- Genital herpes can lead to rare but potentially serious infections in babies. A mother with an active herpes lesion at the time of labor may be advised to deliver via cesarean section.
- **It is the policy of this practice to test all pregnant women for the presence of both HSV 1 & 2 exposure during initial OB blood work and 28 week bloodwork.**
- **The results will be reviewed at your next visit along with your other test results. Any questions can be answered at that time.**
- **Should the test indicate HSV 1 or 2 or both you will be counseled about taking medication to decrease the chance of having a herpes outbreak at or near the time of delivery.**