

Difference Between Cold Sore and Fever Blister

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Cold Sore vs Fever Blister

Many people find the meaning and usage of the two medical terms *cold sore* and *fever blister* confusing. Although some assume that these are two different conditions, both terms cold sores and fever blisters are two interchangeably used words that describe skin [lesions](#) appearing on the skin around the lips due to the [herpes simplex viral infection](#). Thus, **there is no difference between cold sore and fever blister**. In spite of the name, common cold has nothing to do with the occurrence of these lesions.

What are Cold Sores?

Cold sores are the itchy and painful skin lesions that appear on the skin around your lips. These are caused by the herpes simplex virus which damages the skin during its proliferation. Although there are many serotypes of this particular virus, HSV-1 is the culprit in most of the occasions.

Body fluids and saliva of infected people act as the reservoir of this virus. Through the skin breeches, they enter the body and initiate their pathogenesis. An important point to be emphasized is that almost all of us are infected with HSV, but only those who are genetically vulnerable become symptomatic. After the first exposure, the virus continues to remain dormant inside the nerves. Reactivation happens with any weakening of the [immune system](#).

Symptoms

- Appear on the skin around the lips
- Itchy
- Painful
- There can be fever and malaise before the appearance of lesions.

Spread

- Through body fluids of an infected person

- The chance of spread is high when the lesions are in an active stage (i.e. when the lesions are erythematous and painful)



Figure 01: Cold Sore/Fever Blister

Prevention of the Spread

- Avoid kissing and close personal contacts
- Avoid sharing things such as drinking glasses and toothbrushes
- Cleaning the lesions regularly to remove the discharge coming out of them
- Washing hands regularly – this is extremely important to spread the infection to the other regions of the body

Treatment

- There is no definite cure
- Antiviral ointments can be useful
- Painkillers can be used to alleviate the pain

What are Fever Blisters?

As mentioned at the beginning, there is no difference between cold sore and fever blister and they both essentially mean the same thing. But the latter can be considered as the aptest term because almost always the patient gets fever just before the appearance of skin lesions.

What is the difference between Cold Sores and Fever Blisters

Cold sore and fever blister are both the same in each and every aspect. Thus, there is no difference between cold sore and fever blister.

Summary – Cold Sores vs Fever Blisters

Cold sores or fever blisters are a dermatological condition characterized by the appearance of skin lesions on the skin around the mouth as a result of HSV infection. There is no difference between cold sore and fever blister. These lesions usually last for about two weeks and get spontaneously resolved.

References:

1. Buxton, Paul K. ABC of dermatology. London: BMJ , 2007. Print.

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1."Herpes labialis" By Metju12 – Own work (Public Domain) via [Commons Wikimedia](#)

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