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Herpes Cold Sore on Mouth (Image: Getty)

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Oral and genital [herpes](#) viruses are 'having sex', a new study has warned.

Researchers from the University of Washington School of Medicine have revealed that the viruses - HSV-1 and HSV-2 - are mixing together, forming new versions of herpes.

HSV-1 is usually associated with oral lesions, while HSV-2 typically causes genital lesions.

Dr Amanda Casto, who led the study, said: "The main implication is that HSV-1 and HSV-2 are continuing to recombine.

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Oral and genital herpes viruses are 'having sex' (Image: Getty)

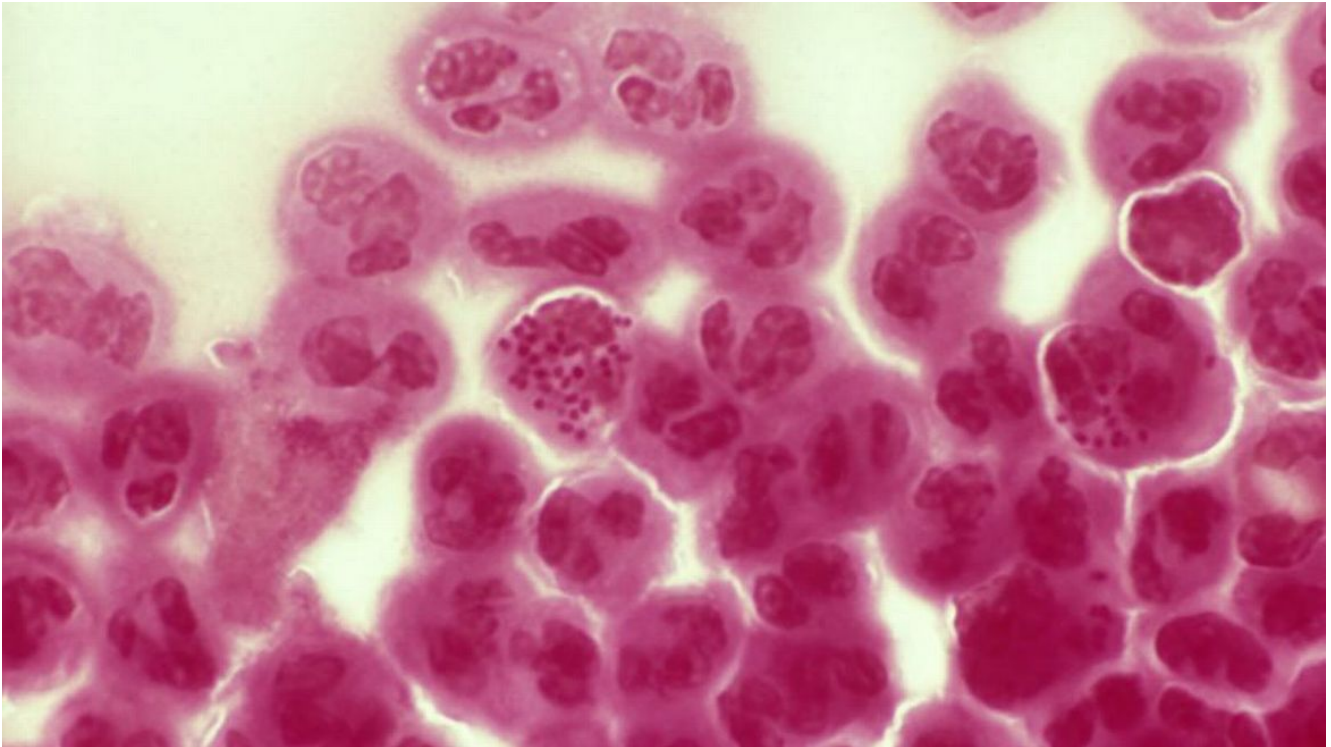
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“This could have important implications for HSV vaccine development, because it means a live HSV-2 vaccine could recombine with circulating HSV-1 strains, thereby forming an infectious virus.”

Speaking to [Live Science](#) , Dr Alex Greninger, co-author of the study, described this as the herpes viruses 'having sex.'

Both HSV-1 and HSV-2 cause incurable, lifelong infections.



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While some people with the virus show no symptoms, others develop painful lesions on their mouths or genitals.

Sadly, there's been little progress made in preventing herpes.

Dr Greninger added: "Herpes is one of the most stigmatised diseases out there, and yet it affects billions of people. We really need more work to combat this virus."