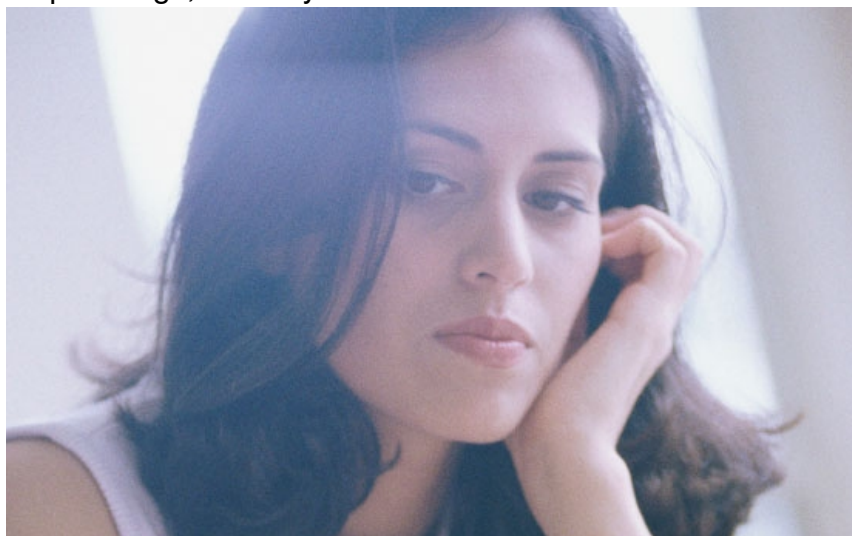


I was diagnosed with herpes two years ago when I was 24. I knew that’s what it was before the doctor even swabbed me. I hadn’t had sex in two months before this initial outbreak and I was confused, ashamed, angry, and hysterical. My last partner claimed he did not have it, but obviously he did.

Now fast forward two years and I still have not come to terms with it. I have not dated since and am still scared to. I’ve never told anyone either because everyone says some pretty ugly things about people with herpes. I try to explain and clear up misconceptions when I hear people say stupid things, but they don’t care.



Wherever I am, I always wonder how many other people in the room or building or whatever have herpes too. I wonder about their relationships. I feel like I have a scarlet “H” on my chest. I hate myself even though I know it’s not my fault. I feel stupid for not using a condom and believing I was in a “safe” situation.

But with the help of my new doctor, I’m slowly coming to terms with it and may try to date again. I have frequent outbreaks which makes me feel worse because I thought that, after two years, they should have decreased by now. But I just started valacyclovir recently. However, the outbreaks don’t bother me physically—I’m used to them.

It tears me up emotionally and I just pray for the day when my feelings change and I can just move on. Everyone addresses these issues and it’s so easy to read advice but hard to take it!

Would you like to share your story in a future Personal Perspectives column? Write us at thehelper@ashastd.org to learn more.