Cold sores, also known as fever blisters, canker sores, oral herpes, and ulcers, are raised and oozing lip, mouth, or facial blisters caused by the herpes simplex virus type 1 strain (HSV-1). Herpes can also affect the genitalia of both men and women and those infections are caused by herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2). Both strains of herpes can create serious problems for a newborn.

Herpes simplex viruses are very contagious! They are usually superficial, uncomfortable, and cosmetically unattractive for adults and children, but they can infect the brain, lungs, liver, skin, and eyes of a baby. The virus will break down the immune system and potentially cause severe illness, neurological damage, or death... even with the best medical care and medication.

The herpes viruses are spread through direct contact with the herpes lesions or direct contact with the secretions, blood, or saliva of someone with the infection. The highest risk of transmission is when someone has an active outbreak and viral shedding is at its peak.

If your family, friends, or visitors have a cold sore, please do not allow them to touch or hold your baby. If you have a cold sore, please remember to wash your hands well before touching your baby. Do not touch your cold sore. Do not kiss your baby until your cold sore is gone. Please consider wearing a mask and applying a dressing over the cold sore to further protect your infant.

If you have any additional questions please discuss them with your physician.