



## **Molluscum Contagiosum**

### **What is molluscum contagiosum?**

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection caused by a virus.

### **What are the symptoms of molluscum contagiosum?**

Molluscum contagiosum appears as small bumps on the skin. The bumps often have a waxy, white or pinkish look and a small pit in the center. A person may have only a few bumps, or many. The bumps spread to different parts of the body by scratching a bump and touching another part of the body. Without treatment, the bumps usually go away after a few months, although they can last up to 2 years.

### **How serious is molluscum contagiosum?**

Molluscum contagiosum is contagious, but harmless. The bumps do not leave scars.

### **How does a person get molluscum contagiosum?**

Someone usually gets molluscum contagiosum from direct contact with a bump on an infected person. A towel or other object used by an infected person may also spread the virus.

### **How long does it take to come down with molluscum contagiosum after a person is exposed?**

Bumps appear weeks to months after exposure to the virus.

### **When is a person with molluscum contagiosum contagious?**

It is unknown how long a person with molluscum contagiosum is contagious, but it may be as long as the skin bumps are present.

### **How can I help prevent the spread of molluscum contagiosum?**

- Wash hands well and often with soap and water, especially after touching bumps.
- Clean, rinse, and sanitize toys regularly at child care.
- Prevent sharing of unwashed clothing, sheets, washcloths, or towels.
- Wash clothing, sheets, washcloths, and towels of person with molluscum contagiosum in hot water.
- Keep infected area(s) covered with clothing or bandage(s) while at child care.
- Keep fingernails short (clip at home) to decrease spread by scratching.

### **What is the treatment for molluscum contagiosum?**

To relieve itching, try applying a small plastic bag of ice wrapped in a paper towel. There is no way to kill the virus that causes molluscum contagiosum, but it usually goes away on its own. The bumps may be removed by a health care provider using surgery or medicines, if desired.

### **If my child develops molluscum contagiosum, must s/he stay away from child care?**

No, as long as s/he does not have any other symptoms that would require exclusion.