



MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

What is MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM?

Molluscum Contagiosum is a common skin disease caused by a virus. It causes small, pink or skin-colored bumps on the skin. These bumps can develop anywhere on the skin. Molluscum Contagiosum does not affect any internal organs of the body.

How do you get Molluscum Contagiosum?

Molluscum Contagiosum is spread from person to person by direct skin-to-skin contact, sexual contact, or by touching a surface with the virus on it, such as a towel, shared athletic equipment, clothing, or toys. Children tend to get Molluscum Contagiosum more often than adults. If a person has the virus, they can also spread the infection to other parts of their own body by touching or scratching a lesion and then touching another part of their body.

What are the symptoms of Molluscum Contagiosum?

The virus causes bumps on the skin that can vary in size. They can occur alone or in groups and are usually smooth and firm. They are often found in areas of the skin that touch each other such as the folds in the arm or groin. They are considered benign and are usually painless, although they may be itchy, red, swollen and/or sore.

How is Molluscum Contagiosum diagnosed?

Molluscum Contagiosum is usually diagnosed based on a medical history and physical examination. The bumps are unique and diagnosis can be made by their characteristic appearance. Tissue or fluid taken from the bumps can also be examined under a microscope to confirm the diagnosis.

What is the treatment for Molluscum Contagiosum?

Treatment options should be discussed with a health care provider. Usually, no treatment is needed because the bumps will disappear by themselves within 6-12 months. However, treatment can prevent the growths from spreading to other parts of the body and to other people. There are a number of treatment options available---similar to the treatment for warts.

How can Molluscum Contagiosum be prevented?

Hand washing is the best way to avoid getting many infections, including Molluscum Contagiosum. Do not touch, pick, or scratch any skin with bumps or blisters (yours or someone else's). Avoid sharing personal items such as clothing and towels. Adults that have bumps in the genital region should use proper protection or avoid sexual activities. Children in school or daycare should wear appropriate clothing or bandages to cover the bumps. Exclusion is only considered if there is drainage or extreme itching and the areas cannot be adequately covered.

Resources:

American Academy of Dermatology:

http://www.aad.org/public/publications/pamphlets/viral_mollscum.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/molluscum/>

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Revised 6/2011