



Patient Education:

Molluscum Contagiosum, Pediatric

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Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection that can cause a rash. The infection is common in children.

CAUSES

Molluscum contagiosum infection is caused by a virus. The virus spreads easily from person to person. It can spread through:

- Skin-to-skin contact with an infected person.
- Contact with infected objects, such as towels or clothing.

RISK FACTORS

Your child may be at higher risk for molluscum contagiosum if he or she:

- Is 1–10 years old.
- Lives in a warm, moist climate.
- Participates in close-contact sports, like wrestling.
- Participates in sports that use a mat, like gymnastics.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The main symptom is a rash that appears 2–7 weeks after exposure to the virus. The rash is made of small, firm, dome-shaped bumps that may:

- Be pink or skin-colored.
- Appear alone or in groups.
- Range from the size of a pinhead to the size of a pencil eraser.
- Feel smooth and waxy.
- Have a pit in the middle.
- Itch. The rash does not itch for most children.

The bumps often appear on the face, abdomen, arms, and legs.

DIAGNOSIS

A health care provider can usually diagnose molluscum contagiosum by looking at the bumps on your child's skin. To confirm the diagnosis, your child's health care provider may scrape the bumps to collect a skin sample to examine under a microscope.

TREATMENT

The bumps may go away on their own, but children often have treatment to keep the virus from infecting someone else or to keep the rash from spreading to other body parts. Treatment may include:

- Surgery to remove the bumps by freezing them (*cryosurgery*).
- A procedure to scrape off the bumps (*curettage*).

- A procedure to remove the bumps with a laser.
- Putting medicine on the bumps (*topical treatment*).

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Give medicines only as directed by your child's health care provider.
- As long as your child has bumps on his or her skin, the infection can spread to others and to other parts of your child's body. To prevent this from happening:
 - Remind your child not to scratch or pick at the bumps.
 - **Do not** let your child share clothing, towels, or toys with others until the bumps disappear.
 - **Do not** let your child use a public swimming pool, sauna, or shower until the bumps disappear.
 - Make sure you, your child, and other family members wash their hands with soap and water often.
 - Cover the bumps on your child's body with clothing or a bandage whenever your child might have contact with others.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- The bumps are spreading.
- The bumps are becoming red and sore.
- The bumps have not gone away after 12 months.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your child's condition.
- Will get help if your child is not doing well or gets worse.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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