

Molluscum Contagiosum

(A common viral skin infection causing small, smooth bumps)

What Is Molluscum Contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum is a common **viral skin infection** caused by a poxvirus. It creates small, smooth, dome-shaped bumps that often have a tiny center dimple.

Molluscum is benign and usually not dangerous, but it can spread to other areas of the skin or to close contacts.



What Does Molluscum Look Like?

Molluscum bumps are usually:

- Small, round, and smooth
- Flesh-colored, pink, or pearly
- Dome-shaped
- Sometimes itchy or irritated
- Often have a small central dimple

Common areas:

- Trunk
- Arms
- Legs
- Face
- Skin folds
- Genital area in adults

How Does Molluscum Spread?

Molluscum spreads through:

- Skin-to-skin contact
- Scratching or shaving over bumps
- Shared towels or sports equipment
- Close contact during play or sports

In adults, genital-area molluscum may spread through sexual contact.

How Is Molluscum Treated?

Some cases go away on their own, but this may take months. Treatment may be recommended if lesions are spreading, itchy, inflamed, cosmetically bothersome, or located in sensitive areas.

Common options include:

- Cryotherapy
- Curettage
- Cantharidin, if available
- Prescription topical treatments
- Observation in selected cases

Children may be treated more conservatively depending on age, number of lesions, and comfort.

Pre-Op Instructions

Before molluscum treatment

- Do not scratch, pick, or shave over bumps.
- Avoid sharing towels, razors, or clothing.
- Tell us if lesions are near the eyes, genitals, or irritated skin.
- Tell us if the patient has eczema or immune suppression.
- Arrive with clean skin and avoid heavy creams or ointments over lesions.

Post-Op Instructions

After in-office treatment

What's normal

- Mild redness or swelling
- Crusting or scabbing
- Temporary tenderness
- Blistering after freezing or cantharidin treatment

Aftercare

- Keep treated areas clean.
- Avoid picking scabs or blisters.
- Cover lesions if they are rubbing or at risk of spreading.
- Avoid shaving over the area until healed.
- Wash hands after touching the skin.

Call the office if you notice increasing pain, spreading redness, pus, fever, or severe blistering.

Molluscum FAQ

Is molluscum contagious?

Yes. It spreads through direct contact and shared items, but it is usually mild.

Is molluscum dangerous?

Usually no. It is benign and often self-limited.

Will molluscum go away on its own?

Yes, but it can take months or longer.

Why is my child's molluscum spreading?

Scratching, rubbing, eczema, and close contact can spread the virus to nearby skin.

Should children stay out of school?

Usually no, but lesions should be covered when possible, especially during contact sports.

Can adults get molluscum?

Yes. Adults can get molluscum through close skin contact, including sexual contact when lesions are in the genital area.

Can treatment leave scars?

Scarring is uncommon but possible, especially if lesions are picked, scratched, or aggressively treated.

Can molluscum become red and inflamed?

Yes. Redness or swelling can happen as the immune system begins clearing the virus, but infection should be ruled out if pain, pus, or spreading redness occurs.