

Fact Sheet

MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

What is it?

Molluscum Contagiosum is a skin infection caused by a virus. It is common in adults and children and may or may not be sexually transmitted.

How is it spread?

You can get molluscum by direct contact with a molluscum lesion (bump) on the skin of an infected person. If a person has molluscum, they can spread it to another part of their own body by shaving the affected area, or scratching or picking at the bump.

What are the symptoms?

After a person comes into contact with molluscum, it takes one week to six months for symptoms to appear. The infection first appears as “pinpoints” on the skin. These pinpoints grow into small, waxy, pinkish-white, clear, yellow or flesh-coloured bumps. There may be only one or a bunch of them together. They usually have a dip in the middle, filled with a firm, white substance. A person can get molluscum on any part of the body. However, it is most common to find them on the abdomen, genitals or thighs. Sometimes molluscum is itchy.

How is it diagnosed?

A doctor can usually tell if a person has molluscum by looking at the lesions (bumps). However, a doctor may mistake them for warts. Sometimes ingrown hair follicles caused by shaving the pubic area can be mistaken for molluscum.

What are the complications?

The most common complication is a bacterial infection at the site of the molluscum. The virus does not seem to affect babies born to infected mothers.

How is it treated?

Doctors sometimes use a medicated solution like Podophyllin to remove the bumps. They may also use liquid nitrogen. Molluscum may come back. In that case, you would need to get treated again. In some people, the infection disappears on its own without treatment.

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What about sexual partners?

It is important to inform any sexual partners or anyone who has had direct contact with the lesion so that they can be checked and treated if necessary.

Is follow-up important?

If symptoms come back, a person can be re-treated.

Remember:

- Avoid sexual contact or close body contact with anyone until all of the molluscum bumps are gone.
- Avoid shaving or scratching the bumps. They can spread to another part of your body.

**For more information
call the AIDS and Sexual Health InfoLine at 416-392-2437**

SAFER SEX

*To reduce your risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI),
use a condom every time you have vaginal, anal or oral sex.*

April 2009