

MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

6.7

DESCRIPTION

A contagious virus infection of the skin. It usually occurs on the inner thighs, abdomen and genitals.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Small raised bumps on the skin.
- Bumps are firm, smooth, domed with a central pit, and skin-colored or white. The skin over the bumps is transparent and thin.
- Bumps are usually 2mm to 3mm in diameter. A few may be as large as 10mm.
- Bumps cause eye irritation if they are on the eyelids.
- Bumps don't hurt or itch.

CAUSES

A virus of the pox group. The germs are spread by person-to-person contact. This virus may be spread sexually. The time period from being exposed to having symptoms is usually 2 to 7 weeks. It may also be spread by touching objects that have the germs on them, such as shared clothing, towels, wash cloths, and sports equipment.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Other allergies or a family history of allergy.
- Use of drugs that cause a weak immune system.
- Outbreaks have been reported among children using swimming pools.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- To prevent spread to other parts of the body or to other people, don't scratch bumps.
- Practice good personal hygiene.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Outcome is good. They heal on their own without treatment in otherwise healthy people. It will take about 10 to 24 months. Treatment helps to prevent their spread to other persons and to speed up the healing time.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Some scarring can occur
- The bumps can become irritated, inflamed, and infected by bacteria.
- The problem may recur.

GENERAL MEASURES

- The health care provider can diagnose the disorder by a skin exam of the affected area. If needed, the diagnosis can be confirmed with a skin scraping and microscopic study.
- Treatment is not always needed. In some cases, drugs may be recommended for treatment.
- Bumps may be removed with surgery. Options include cutting, burning electrically or chemically, or by freezing.

MEDICATION

Medicine usually is not necessary for this disorder. In some cases, topical medications to be used at home may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY & DIET

No restrictions, except to avoid sexual relations until bumps disappear. No special diet.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- You have symptoms of molluscum contagiosum.
- A re-infection occurs after treatment
- New unexplained symptoms

Student Health Center



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This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.