

Molluscum Contagiosum

Molluscum contagiosum is a common viral skin infection that causes raised bumps on the skin.

How do I get molluscum?

Molluscum can be spread by sexual contact, skin-to-skin contact, or contact with contaminated objects (e.g., towels, clothing, tanning beds, gym equipment).

Molluscum can be anywhere on the body, except the bottoms of the hands and feet. Molluscum on the genitals might sometimes be mistaken for herpes or warts.

How do I know if I have molluscum?

You need to see a doctor or nurse to be diagnosed.

Molluscum starts as small, painless bumps that may become raised. They can be pearl or flesh-coloured and often have a dimple in the centre. In adults, the bumps are common on the genitals, abdomen, and inner thighs.

Are molluscum harmful?

Molluscum may last for a few months to a few years. They do go away without any scarring, unless there is lots of scratching. Single bumps usually go away in 2 to 3 months. The bumps are usually all gone in 6 to 18 months. They can last longer in people with weak immune systems.

How are molluscum treated?

Molluscum may go away without treatment.

Molluscum can be treated in a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Clinic or doctor's office with freezing (liquid nitrogen). You might need more than 1 treatment.

How can I prevent molluscum from spreading?

Tell your partner(s) that you have molluscum so you can make choices to lower the risk of spreading the virus.

Using a condom is good protection against STIs. But, condoms don't cover all the skin around the genitals and won't completely protect against molluscum.

Don't share personal items (e.g., towels, clothes, razors) while you have molluscum.

For More Information

- STI/HIV Information Line: 1-800-772-2437
- www.myhealth.alberta.ca
- www.sexgerms.com



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