



What is molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum (pronounced moll-*us*-kum kon-ta-ji-*o*-sum) is a skin rash. It is an infection due to a common virus. Small bumps occur on the skin over the affected area of the body, but not on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet.

The bumps contain white curd-like material. The material contains the virus. The virus can spread from person to person by touching that material.

The person with the rash usually feels fine. The bumps don't hurt or itch. The bumps go away on their own over several weeks. They don't usually leave scars.

This skin rash is found mainly in children and young adults.

What are the symptoms of molluscum contagiosum?

There are no symptoms with molluscum contagiosum, only a bumpy rash that does not itch.



What tests are needed?

Tests are not needed. Doctors know the infection just by looking at the bumps on the skin. In some cases, your doctor may want to look at the white curd-like material under a microscope.

What treatment is needed?

The bumps will go away on their own over several weeks. However, they are often treated to keep the virus from infecting someone else. They are also treated to keep them from spreading to other body parts.

The bumps can be removed by using lasers, freezing, or scraping. Sometimes these treatments leave scars. Special medicated skin creams can also help bumps go away.

Treatment may have to be repeated as new bumps come. See your doctor if the bumps get worse.



Do

Do relax. The bumps will go away.



Don't

Until the bumps are gone:

- Don't share hand towels with another person
- Don't do things that put you in close contact with other people
- Try to avoid contact sports
- Don't scratch your skin
- Don't use public swimming pools, saunas, and showers
- Don't use a type of skin cream called a 'steroid'



Recovery time

Each bump lasts about two months. All the bumps should be gone in six to 12 months.



What can be done to stop it from happening again?

You can get this infection again. Avoid being close to someone who has the infection. Also, don't share hand towels with someone who has the infection.