

# Molluscum contagiosum

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## *What is Molluscum contagiosum?*

Molluscum contagiosum are a common skin infection that can develop in adults and children. Molluscum contagiosum appear as small flesh-coloured bumps on the skin with a pit or dimple in the centre. They are usually painless. In adults, molluscum contagiosum most commonly cause infection in the pubic and genital area. In children the infection usually occurs on the back and chest.

## *How did I get molluscum contagiosum?*

Molluscum contagiosum are spread by skin-to-skin contact or through contact with a surface that has the virus on it. The virus can spread:

- from one area of the body to another by scratching a bump;
- from person to person through skin-to-skin contact during sex; and
- by touching an object with the virus on it, such as a towel used by another person with Molluscum contagiosum.

## *How are molluscum contagiosum diagnosed?*

A clinician will usually diagnose Molluscum contagiosum by examining the skin. They may also be diagnosed from a small skin sample (called a biopsy) which is sent to a laboratory.

## *What is the treatment for molluscum contagiosum?*

Your clinician will discuss treatment options with you. If left untreated, molluscum contagiosum will resolve in healthy people however this may take several years.

Your health care provider may recommend cryotherapy to treat the Molluscum contagiosum. This treatment option involves freezing the molluscum with liquid nitrogen. Cryotherapy can be painful and can have side effects including skin irritation, swelling and blistering which can last several days but these side effects do not usually require treatment.

It is safe to have cryotherapy during pregnancy.

## *How can I reduce my risk of contracting molluscum contagiosum?*

Molluscum contagiosum is most easily spread by skin-to-skin contact so using condoms can reduce the risk of you getting or transmitting the virus. If you notice your partner has unusual bumps in the pubic or genital area, ask them to see their healthcare provider.

## ***Are there any complications from having Molluscum contagiosum?***

Serious complications are very rare, but the condition can cause skin irritation in the area where bumps are present. People who have a lowered immune system may have problems with Molluscum contagiosum growing larger and becoming widespread. These people may also be less responsive to treatment.

## ***Will my sexual partner(s) also get Molluscum contagiosum?***

If you have Molluscum contagiosum it's possible that your sexual partner(s) will also have or get Molluscum contagiosum. Your sexual partner(s) should see their healthcare provider if they notice any symptoms.

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### **References**

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