

## Infections - viral



# Molluscum Contagiosum

## Important Points

- Molluscum contagiosum is a viral infection on the skin
- The spots commonly occur on the warm, moist areas of the skin around the genital area, the anal area or the armpits
- Eczema may occur with the spots, or the spots may be worse when a child has a tendency to eczema
- Most spots of molluscum contagiosum disappear within 6-9 months without any treatment and do not leave scars

## What is it?

Molluscum contagiosum is a viral infection that can affect people of all ages. It causes small wart like lumps on the surface of the skin. They are shiny, pearly white domes with a central core. The number of spots can vary greatly from only 3-4 up to 50-60 at times.

The molluscum contagiosum spots can occur on any part of the body, but are common around the genital and anal areas, in the armpits or on the sides of the trunk of the body. It tends to be worse in children with eczema. Eczema can occur around the spots making the children scratch and spread them more widely. The spots will eventually disappear when the body's natural immunity to the virus develops. This can take from a few weeks to several years. Most spots disappear within 6-9 months. They may last longer in children with a tendency to eczema.

## How is it prevented?

Molluscum contagiosum is a viral infection that is transferred from one infected child to another. To prevent spreading the virus the infected child should avoid swimming pools and not share baths, towels or face washers with other children at home.

## How is it treated?

Treatment is not necessary in most cases of molluscum contagiosum as it gets better without any treatment and does not leave any scars. If the spots start to become inflamed or sore, or if the associated eczema is troublesome, a doctor may suggest treatment. Any eczema may be treated with mild cortisone creams. Occasionally a doctor may freeze the spots with liquid nitrogen. However, as these spots heal by themselves without leaving scars, it is important not to use any treatment that causes long term scarring. If there

are only a few spots, they may go away more rapidly if covered with the sticky end of a bandaid that is replaced every day.

**Further Information**

Your Maternal and Child Health nurse.

Your pharmacist.

Your family doctor.

A dermatologist.

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