

Dear Parents,

A few cases of Molluscum Contagiosum have been reported in the community. In conjunction with the Jasper County Health Department we are sending out information on how this condition is transmitted, what it looks like and how to treat it. Following is the information from the Jasper county health department.

Molluscum Contagiosum is a viral skin infection that causes small pearly or flesh-colored bumps. The bumps may be clear, and the center often is indented. The infection is caused by a virus. The virus is easily spread from person to person. The molluscum contagiosum rash begins as tiny painless papules (small raised bumps), each measuring about 2-5 mm in diameter.

What are the symptoms?

The bumps are round with a dimple in the center. They are a little smaller in size than the eraser on the end of a pencil. The bumps don't cause pain. In children, they commonly occur on the face, trunk, and limbs. Adults often get lesions on the genital area, the lower abdomen, the buttocks, and the inner thigh. Usually, fewer than 20 lesions appear, but several hundred are possible. The bumps may become inflamed and turn red as your body fights the virus. The lesions do not affect the palms or soles and only rarely affect the mucous membranes of the mouth. Usually, there is no itching or tenderness, and there are no generalized symptoms such as a fever, nausea, or weakness.

How does molluscum contagiosum spread?

The virus commonly spreads through skin-to-skin contact. This includes touching the bumps and then touching the skin. Touching an object that has the virus on it, such as a towel, also can spread the infection. The virus can spread from one part of the body to another. Or it can spread to other people, such as among children at school. The infection is contagious until the bumps are gone. Scratching the lesions should be avoided to prevent the spread of the virus to other parts of the body and to prevent potential secondary bacterial skin infections

The time from exposure to the virus until the bumps appear usually is 2 to 7 weeks, but it can take up to 1 year.

To prevent molluscum contagiosum from spreading:

- Try not to scratch.
- Put a piece of tape or a bandage over the bumps.
- Do not share towels or washcloths.
- Do not try to squeeze the fluid out of the bumps.
- If the bumps are on your face, don't shave.

How is it treated?

In most cases, molluscum contagiosum doesn't need to be treated. However, if you notice any of these bumps on your body see your family health care provider immediately. The bumps usually go away on their own in 6 to 9 months. But in some cases, they may last much longer—sometimes even for 4 to 6 years. Sometimes the lesions can become irritated, inflamed, and secondarily infected by bacteria. If this occurs, consult a health-care professional to discuss the need for antibiotics.



Close-up view of typical molluscum bumps.
Typical bumps are approximately 3-5 mm
in diameter.
Image courtesy Dave Bray, MD, WRAMC

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