

Learn About Molluscum Contagiosum

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Image taken from: <https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/molluscum-contagiosum.html>

1. What is molluscum contagiosum, how common is it, and whom does it affect?

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin disease, caused by a virus (see question 3). This virus most frequently affects children, but it can also affect adults (see question 2).

2. Who can get molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum most frequently affects children, especially between 1-10 years old due to contact with other children in daycares and schools; additionally, children with atopic dermatitis may have the disease for a longer time and produce a greater number of lesions due to deficiencies in the skin barrier. However, young adults can also acquire it, mainly through sexual transmission. And finally, it can affect people with a weakened immune system (people with low defenses).

3. What is the cause of molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum is caused by the molluscum contagiosum virus, which belongs to the poxvirus family. This virus can be transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact, with contaminated objects, sexual contact (in adults), and by autoinoculation (spreading the lesion from one part of the body to another, especially with scratching).

4. How does molluscum contagiosum manifest?

Molluscum contagiosum looks like small, round bumps with a depression in the center of the lesion in the shape of a navel; they are skin colored, pink, or brownish, with a shiny appearance; they can cause a lot of itching and are located on any part of the body.



5. What complications can molluscum contagiosum cause?

The most common complication that can occur is a bacterial infection, which is due to scratching the lesions; these can leave scars. Additionally, if the irritation is on the eyelids, conjunctivitis may occur.

6. When should you consult a doctor?

It is always important to consult a health professional upon noticing new skin lesions, as it is necessary to differentiate them from other diseases.

7. How is molluscum contagiosum diagnosed?

The diagnosis is made by the attending physician just by seeing the characteristics and location of the lesions (sometimes with the help of a magnifying medical instrument for greater detail). But in some cases, to confirm or rule out the diagnosis, a sample of the lesion may be required, depending on the doctor's consideration.

8. How is molluscum contagiosum treated?

The first thing to do is consult a doctor, who will provide recommendations for managing the lesions. Occasionally, if the lesions are numerous and aesthetically very noticeable, the doctor may prescribe medications to apply to the lesions or other treatments to eliminate them: laser, cryotherapy (treatment with cold), or manual extraction.

9. Is it possible to prevent the spread of molluscum contagiosum?

Yes, although there is currently no vaccine for prevention, there are some preventive measures that can be taken

- If there are already lesions: avoid scratching and manipulating them, as they can spread to another part of the body.
- Do not share towels, underwear, razors, or bathing implements.
- In children, avoid sharing toys if there are active lesions.
- In adults: use of a condom during sexual intercourse.



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