

MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

6.7

DESCRIPTION

A common contagious viral infection of the skin. It usually occurs on the inner thighs, abdomen and genitals.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Small raised bumps on the skin.
- Bumps are firm, smooth, domed with a central pit (skin-colored or white).
- Bumps are usually 2mm to 3mm in diameter. A few may be as large as 10mm.
- Bumps don't hurt or itch.

CAUSES

A virus of the pox group. The germs are spread by person-to-person contact. This virus may be spread sexually. The time period from being exposed to having symptoms is usually 2 to 7 weeks. It may also be spread by touching objects that have the germs on them, such as shared clothing, towels, wash cloths, and sports equipment.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- A weakened immune system.
- Outbreaks have been reported among children using swimming pools.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- To prevent spread to other parts of the body or to other people, don't scratch.
- Practice good personal hygiene and handwashing.
- Avoid shaving over the infected areas, as this can spread the virus.
- Avoid sexual contact until the areas have been treated and have completely resolved.
- Do not share personal items such as unwashed clothes, bar soap, towels, etc.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Outcome is good. They heal on their own without treatment in otherwise healthy people. It will take about 10 to 24 months. Treatment helps to prevent their spread to other persons and to speed up the healing time.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Some scarring can occur
- The bumps can become irritated, inflamed, and infected by bacteria.
- The problem may recur.

GENERAL MEASURES

- The health care provider can diagnose the disorder by a skin exam of the affected area. If needed, the diagnosis can be confirmed with a skin scraping and microscopic study.
- Bumps may be removed with surgery. Options include freezing, scraping, or electrical or chemical removal.

ACTIVITY & DIET

No restrictions, except to avoid sexual relations until bumps disappear. No special diet.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- You have symptoms of molluscum contagiosum.
- A re-infection occurs after treatment
- New unexplained symptoms

References: www.cdc.gov

Student Health Center

WWW.SHC.SIUC.EDU

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.



618-453-3311

For after hours emergencies call 911 or go to the emergency room.