



Molluscum Contagiosum

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What is it?

- Skin infection caused by virus from poxvirus family
- Can affect both men and women

Signs and Symptoms

You may be infected with Molluscum Contagiosum if you notice tiny skin-coloured or pearly lesions (bumps) around the genitals. These bumps are usually not painful but may become irritating and itchy. While the bumps can occur anywhere on the body, they commonly occur in the genital area.

Spread

The virus can be spread from person-to-person through close bodily contact or sexual contact with the infected person. Because the virus can live on objects for short periods of time, you could also become infected by sharing a wet towel, clothing or gym equipment with someone who is infected. Once you have the infection, scratching the infected area with your hands can help spread the virus to other parts of your body.

Because this virus can be spread through close person-to-person contact, it is possible to spread the virus to your partner.

Duration

The lesions grow slowly for a period of weeks or months. Usually within two to six months, most lesions will heal spontaneously without any scarring, however, in some adults, they may remain for a longer period of time. Once the lesions are gone, you are no longer at risk of spreading the virus to someone else.

Diagnosis

Because the bumps can be easily mistaken for genital warts, it is important to see your doctor if you notice anything unusual around the genital area. Your doctor will examine you and will be able to determine what the source of infection is.

Complications

The most commonly occurring complication is a bacterial infection in the area of the infection. Another complication is scarring, which can occur as a result of treatments such as freezing, or if you pick at the bumps.

Pregnancy: If you are pregnant, it is important to know that the molluscum virus does not seem to affect babies who are born to mothers who have been infected.

Treatment and Prevention

All possible treatment options should be discussed with your doctor. In some people, the infection may disappear on its own; therefore, treatment may not be needed.

For those who require treatment, your doctor may use one of several treatments. These could include:

- Freezing (cryotherapy)—a procedure where extreme cold is used to freeze and destroy the bump, thus, killing off the infection.
- Laser therapy—a procedure where a light beam evaporates the bump
- Surgery—local anesthetic is applied and the bumps are cut away

Your doctor may also use medication such as Podophyllin and TCA to remove the bumps.

You may become re-infected. Just because you have recovered from an infection does not prevent you from getting another infection in the future.

Medical Follow-up

You need to see your doctor if the symptoms return.

Additional Information

- Avoid having sexual or close body contact with your partner and others until the infection is gone
- DO NOT scratch the infected area, as doing so can spread the virus to other parts of your body
- Get tested! It is possible to have more than one infection at a time, so it is important to get tested for other STIs

****If you have any type of infection in the genital area, it is important to inform your partner so that they can also be properly examined and treated if need be****

This information is for general knowledge only and does not replace professional medical advice. For STI testing or more information, contact our confidential sexual health clinic at 519-753-4937 ext. 471.