



# Molluscum Contagiosum

## What is molluscum contagiosum?

A skin disease caused by a virus, somewhat similar to warts

## What are the signs or symptoms?

Small, flesh-colored bumps on the skin, often with a tiny, hard, indented, seedlike center

## What are the incubation and contagious periods?

- Incubation period: Usually between 2 and 7 weeks but may be as long as 6 months
- Contagious period: Unknown

## How is it spread?

- Person to person through close contact
- Through sharing of inanimate objects, such as dress-up clothing, or direct contact

## How do you control it?

- Perform hand hygiene after touching the bumps.
- Do not share clothing or other skin contact articles.
- Do not scratch the bumps because that may cause further spread of the virus to another site (autoinoculation).
- Usually goes away on its own in 6 to 12 months as the person develops antibodies to the virus; however, may last for years.
- In some cases, treatments may be used to destroy the bumps. However, the treatments may involve painful scraping, freezing, burning, or chemically damaging the bumps. These treatments may cause scars.
- Cover the lesions where possible with clothing or a watertight bandage when close skin-to-skin contact or water activities involve skin where the bumps are present.
- Although molluscum contagiosum bumps represent a viral infection, they are very mildly contagious and most often are spread to other areas of the affected child's body rather than to other children.



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Small raised bumps, sometimes with a tiny indentation in the center, are typical of molluscum contagiosum.



AAP

Molluscum contagiosum bumps may appear white or flesh-colored on darker-skinned individuals.

## What are the roles of the educator and the family?

- Perform hand hygiene after touching the bumps.
- Do not let children pick at their bumps because this may cause an opening in the skin, which promotes bacterial infection or further spread of the viral infection.

## Exclude from educational setting?

**No.**

## Comment

To prevent spread, try to address skin disruption from scratching. Fingernails should be kept short. To reduce scratching at school or at home, use cold compresses (a small plastic bag of ice wrapped in a towel).