

MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection that mainly affects children and young adults. It may last longer and cover more of the body in people with eczema (skin disease) or those with have a weakened immune system.

- CAUSE:** A poxvirus.
- SYMPTOMS:** Small, pale, shiny, domed-shaped areas on the skin (lesions), often with a characteristic dimple on the top. The lesions may be flesh-colored, white, translucent, or yellow. In children, the lesions occur on the face, body, arms, or legs. In adults, the lesions occur in the genital area or lower abdomen. People with eczema or who have a weakened immune system may have more intense and widespread lesions.
- SPREAD:** From direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. It is less likely to be spread by contact with contaminated objects such as sharing clothes, towels, wash cloths, gym equipment, wrestling mats, or swimming pools. Humans are the only known source of the virus. May be acquired during sexual contact.
- INCUBATION:** It takes 2 weeks to 6 months, usually 2 to 7 weeks, from when a person is exposed until symptoms develop.
- CONTAGIOUS PERIOD:** Unknown; probably while lesions are present. Contagiousness is generally low.
- EXCLUSION:** Children with visible lesions should not participate in close contact activities such as wrestling or swimming.
- DIAGNOSIS:** See your healthcare provider.
- TREATMENT:** Discuss treatment options with your healthcare provider.
- PREVENTION/CONTROL:**
1. Avoid swimming pools and contact sports until the infection has cleared.
 2. DO NOT share towels and washcloths.

For more information, you or your healthcare provider may call Hennepin County Community Health Department at (952) 351-5230, or call your local health department.