

**What is molluscum contagiosum?**

It is a skin disease somewhat similar to warts and caused by a virus.

Who is at risk for molluscum contagiosum?

Although anyone can get molluscum contagiosum, it is more often seen in children.

What are the symptoms of molluscum contagiosum?

The symptoms include small, flesh-colored bumps on the skin, often with a tiny, hard, indented, seed-like center.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear between two and seven weeks, but may take as long as six months to appear.

How is molluscum contagiosum spread?

- Person-to-person through close contact
- Through inanimate objects such as towels

When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?

Unknown.

How is a person diagnosed?

The disease is diagnosed by the visual appearance of the bumps.

What is the treatment?

The symptoms usually go away without treatment within a few months. Alternatively, there are treatments that may be used, but there is little agreement on effective treatments. Treatment is a personal choice and not an infection control issue for a group setting. Contact your health-care provider for treatment options.

Does past infection make a person immune?

Unknown.

Should children or others be excluded from day care, school, work or other activities if they have molluscum contagiosum?

No. Although molluscum contagiosum bumps represent a viral infection, they are mildly contagious and most often spread to other areas of the infected child's body instead of spreading to other children. Children participating in close-contact sports, such as wrestling, should be excluded if lesions are visible and cannot be covered.

What can be done to prevent the spread of molluscum contagiosum disease?

- Wash your hands after touching the bumps.
- Do not use towels also used by an infected adult or child.
- To prevent the spread of bumps to another site, avoid scratching the bumps.

Additional Information:

Additional information is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease or by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

Resource: American Academy of Pediatrics. Molluscum Contagiosum. In: Pickering LK, ed. *Red Book: 2003 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 26th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2003: 437-438.

