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Molluscum Contagiosum

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection that is caused by a virus. The virus, called the molluscum virus, produces benign raised lesions, or bumps, on the upper layers of your skin. The small bumps usually are painless. They disappear on their own and rarely leave scars when left untreated. **The length of time the virus lasts varies for each person, but the bumps can last from two months up to four years.**

Molluscum contagiosum is spread by direct contact with the lesion of an infected person or by contact with a contaminated object such as towels. **You can contract molluscum contagiosum in locker rooms if you do not wear slippers or on wet surfaces around the swimming pool.** While no one is entirely risk-free molluscum contagiosum, certain groups are more likely to become infected than others. Children between the ages of 1 and 10 are more prone to Molluscum than adults. The best way to avoid getting molluscum contagiosum is to avoid touching the skin of another person who has the infection. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, Avoid co-bathing with children that have Molluscum.

If you or your child comes in contact with the molluscum virus, you may not see symptoms of infection for up to six months. The average incubation period is between two and seven weeks. You may notice the appearance of a small group of painless lesions. These bumps may appear alone or in a patch of as many as 20. They usually are: very small, shiny, and smooth in appearance, flesh-colored, white, or pink, firm and dome-shaped with a dent or dimple in the middle, between 2 millimeters (the size of the head of a pin) and 5 millimeters (the size of an eraser on the top of a pencil) in diameter found anywhere except on the palms of your hands or the soles of your feet, usually present on the face, abdomen, torso, arms, and legs, located on the inner thigh, genitals, or abdomen in adults.

In most cases, if you have a normal immune system, **it will not be necessary to treat the lesions caused by molluscum contagiosum.** The bumps will fade away without intervention. However, some circumstances may justify the need for treatment. In our office we rarely use Cantharone or “beetle juice” to help treat the lesions. We prefer not to treat Molluscum unless we catch it at a very early stage before it has spread.

“Dr Simai’s Natural Treatment” of Molluscum is to apply tea tree oil to the lesions with a Q-tip daily and cover with duct tape or surgical tape overnight. Do not apply anything on the face or close to eyes as the skin is very sensitive. This method is effective in about 50% of the time).

Most importantly, Molluscum lesions blister before they die. If you notice these blisters apply antibiotic ointment on them twice daily to prevent a skin infection. The best way to avoid getting molluscum contagiosum is to avoid touching the skin of another person who has the infection. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, Avoid co-bathing with children that have Molluscum.