Molluscum Contagiosum

Molluscum contagiosum is a viral infection is a viral infection of the skin that causes smooth surfaced, firm, small (3-5 mm), dome-shaped bumps (*papules*) which are flesh-colored. The bumps usually do not hurt or itch. In children, they most often appear on the face, trunk, arms and legs. In adults, the growths are commonly found on the genitals, thighs, face, neck, and belly (*abdomen*). The infection may be spread to others by close (skin to skin) contact (such as occurs in schools and swimming pools), sharing towels and clothing, and through sexual contact. The bumps usually disappear without treatment in 2 to 4 months, especially in children. You may have them treated to avoid spreading them. Scraping (*curetting*) the middle part (*central plug*) of the bump with a needle or sharp curette, or application of liquid nitrogen for 8 or 9 seconds usually cures the infection.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not scratch the bumps. This may spread the infection to other parts of the body and to other people.
- Avoid close contact with others, including sexual contact, until the bumps disappear. Do not share towels or clothing.
- If liquid nitrogen was used, blisters will form. Leave the blisters alone and cover with a bandage. The tops will fall off by themselves in 7 to 14 days.
- 4 months without a lesion is usually a cure.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- An oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) develops, not controlled by medication.
- You develop swelling, redness, pain, tenderness, or warmth in the areas of the bumps. They may be infected.

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