

# Facts about Molluscum contagiosum

**Molluscum contagiosum is caused by a virus that affects the top layers of the skin.** It is found throughout the world but it is more common in places with warm, humid climates.

The symptoms may appear two weeks after someone catches the virus but may take as long as six months.

At first, an infected person will have tiny, painless bumps on the skin. After many weeks, the bumps grow to be firm, pinkish-white, raised and doughnut-shaped.

In children, the bumps often appear on the face, body, legs and arms. The infection can be spread to the genital area by scratching. In adults, the bumps can be found anywhere on the body.

This infection is most common in children under ten years of age, but anyone can catch it. It can be severe in people with an immune system problem.

## How is Molluscum contagiosum Spread?

**Molluscum contagiosum is spread by skin-to-skin contact or by touching objects that have the virus on them, such as towels.** It also spreads when someone scratches the bumps and then scratches another part of the body.

A doctor can examine the skin to find out if a child has Molluscum contagiosum. The bumps usually go away without treatment in two to six months. In some cases, they may last for years. A doctor may prescribe medicine to stop the bumps from spreading.



## What to Do at Home

- If another child has Molluscum contagiosum, watch your child for signs of Molluscum contagiosum.
- **Call your doctor** if you think your child has Molluscum contagiosum.
- Make sure everyone in the house washes his or her hands carefully with soap and water after touching infected skin.
- Do not share facecloths or towels.
- Tell your child not to scratch the bumps and if possible, use bandages to cover them up.
- Watch for new bumps or bumps that seem to be spreading or not getting any better.
- Watch the bumps for signs of infection such as redness, swelling, pus-like drainage or increased pain.



**A child with Molluscum contagiosum may go to the child care centre or school.**

