



# Molluscum Contagiosum

## What is molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection caused by a virus. It appears as small, pearl-shaped flesh coloured, white, translucent or yellow bumps on the skin. Each bump has a dip in the middle. It is not a serious disease and usually clears up after six months. It can, however, last for up to two years.

## How molluscum contagiosum spreads

Molluscum contagiosum is spread by direct contact with the molluscum on the skin of an infected person. This can happen during close physical contact or during sex. The molluscum may also be passed to other parts of the body by hands during scratching.

## Symptoms of molluscum contagiosum

Symptoms usually appear one week to six months after being exposed to the virus. The infection appears as painless “pinpoints” on the skin. These pinpointes grow into small, smooth, waxy bumps. They have a dip in the middle and a milky-white liquid inside. They may be found on any part of the body.

## Diagnosing molluscum contagiosum

Your doctor can usually tell if you have Molluscum contagiosum by looking at the bumps on your skin. Sometimes these bumps can be mistaken for warts.

## Complications of molluscum contagiosum

The most common complication is a bacterial infection at the site of the molluscum caused by scratching. The molluscum virus does not seem to affect babies born to infected mothers.

## Treating molluscum contagiosum

You may choose whether or not to have molluscum treated depending on their location and severity. Your doctor may use a medicated solution to remove the bumps. Even after removal, the molluscum may come back and you may need treatment repeated.

## What about sexual partners?

Sexual partners and others who have direct contact with the molluscum should be informed so they can be checked and possibly treated if they have molluscum.

For further information, please call:  
**York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653**  
**TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)**

## Is follow-up important?

You may return to your doctor or clinic for further treatment if symptoms return.

## Remember:

- avoid sex or close body contact with sexual partner(s) and others until all your molluscum bumps are gone
- avoid scratching the infected area to prevent spreading the virus to other parts of the body
- use condoms to reduce the chance of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and to prevent pregnancy
- it is possible to have more than one infection at a time, so it is important to be tested for other STIs

For further information, please call:  
**York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653**  
**TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)**

