



MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM - FACT SHEET

DEFINITION:

Molluscum contagiosum is an infection caused by a poxvirus (molluscum contagiosum virus). The result of the infection is usually a benign, mild skin disease characterized by lesions (growths) that may appear anywhere on the body. Within 6-12 months, Molluscum contagiosum typically resolves without scarring but may take as long as 4 years.

CHARACTERISTICS:

The lesions, known as Mollusca, are small, raised, and usually white, pink, or flesh-colored with a dimple or pit in the center. They often have a pearly appearance. They're usually smooth and firm. In most people, the lesions range from about the size of a pinhead to as large as a pencil eraser (2 to 5 millimeters in diameter). They may become itchy, sore, red, and/or swollen.

MODE OF TRANSMISSION & CONTROL

The virus that causes molluscum spreads from direct person-to-person physical contact and through contaminated fomites. Fomites are inanimate objects that can become contaminated with virus; in the instance of molluscum contagiosum this can include linens such as clothing and towels, bathing sponges, pool equipment, and toys.

HOME MANAGEMENT

- Practice good hand washing hygiene.
- It is important not to touch, pick, or scratch skin that has lesions. Picking and scratching can spread the virus to other parts of the body and makes it easier to spread the disease to other people too.
- Avoid sharing washcloths or towels.
- Molluscum contagiosum can be spread to other team members during contact sports. Lesions should be covered or treated.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- Contact your child's physician for diagnosis and treatment. Your student will need a doctor's note to return to school to determine medical clearance.
- It is important to keep the area with molluscum lesions clean and covered with clothing or a bandage so that others do not touch the lesions and become infected.
- Don't share personal items such as clothes, hair brushes, wrist watches, and bars of soap.