

Molluscum Contagiosum

Description:

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection caused by the molluscum contagiosum virus.

Symptoms:

The skin lesions look like small, raised, round wart-like lumps with a depression in the centre. They are usually less than 5mm across the widest part. They can be white, pearly or yellow in colour. They are usually not painful or irritating. In adults, it is common to find them around the genitals, pubic area and thighs.

Transmission:

Molluscum contagiosum is spread by direct skin contact with a person who has the infection. Lesions around the genitals can transmit the virus through sexual contact.

Treatment:

Molluscum contagiosum is usually identified by looking at the skin lesions.

In most people, the lesions will go away if they are left alone. Treatments such as freezing are available and can be talked over with your doctor.

Health Outcome:

Most lesions will go away if they are left alone; however it usually takes several months, and sometimes longer, for all the lesions to disappear. In people with a weakened immune system (eg. HIV-positive), the lesions may persist for a long time and become quite large.

Prevention:

You should not have sex with someone who has a visible lump or sore on or near the genitals. Genital lumps or sores could be due to molluscum or some other sexually transmissible infection (STI) such as herpes, genital warts or syphilis. If a sexual partner has a genital lump or ulcer, advise that person to have a sexual health check.

Practise safer sex. Always using condoms with water-based lubricant when you have vaginal or anal sex is the best way to avoid getting an STI. This reduces the risk of the condom breaking. Oil-based lubricants should not be used, as they weaken the condom and may cause it to break. If you are giving a man oral sex (his penis in your mouth), then he should wear a condom. It does not matter whether you are male or female, if you put your mouth in contact with your partner's anus or vulva while having sex, you should use a dental dam.

Help and Assistance

For more information on molluscum contagiosum, you can talk to your local:

- doctor
- sexual health clinic
- family planning clinic

Other Resources

[Queensland Health Sexual Health website](#)

Related Content

[Safe Sex](#) fact sheet

[Sexually Transmissible Infections](#) fact sheet

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