
▶ **What is molluscum?**

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin-to-skin infection caused by a virus

▶ **How is molluscum spread?**

You can get molluscum:

- by having direct skin-to-skin contact both sexual and non-sexual with someone who has a molluscum bump
- by scratching bumps and touching other parts of the body
- through contact with contaminated items (e.g. towels, clothing or toys) that have been in contact with the bumps

▶ **How can I tell if I have molluscum?**

You might notice:

- a painless, firm smooth, shiny, skin-colour, white or yellow bump with a dimple in the middle
- itchiness
- that the bumps appear 7 days to 2 months (may be up to 6 months) after contact with an infected person

For adults: bumps usually appear on the lower abdomen, inner thighs or genitals

For children: bumps usually appear on the face, trunk, arms or legs.

▶ **Is there a test for molluscum?**

A health care provider can tell if you have molluscum by looking at your skin for bumps.

▶ **How is molluscum treated?**

Untreated, bumps can last 2 weeks to 4 years (average time is 2 years).

Treatment can shorten the length of the infection and reduce the spread. Molluscum can be treated with a cream, frozen with liquid nitrogen or removed surgically.

▶ **Is follow-up necessary?**

No follow-up is necessary unless you continue to have symptoms after your treatment is done.

▶ **How do I protect myself and others?**

- Do not share towels, personal items or sex toys
- Cover the bumps if someone may come in contact with them
- Avoid sexual contact while bumps are present
- Avoid direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person's bumps
- Always wash your hands after touching the bumps
- Do not shave the area as it may cause the bumps to spread
- Use condoms or barriers for all sexual activity. Be aware that condoms will not protect areas of the skin not covered by the condom.

Inform any sexual partners or anyone who may have had direct contact with the bumps, so they can be checked and treated if necessary.

▶ **Who can I talk to if I have more questions?**

If you have concerns or questions, call and ask for Sexual Health, or visit the health unit website below.



**simcoe
muskoka**
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Tel: 705-721-7520
Toll free: 1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

▶ **References**

[Public Health Agency Canada](http://www.canada.ca)
[Centres for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.ca)

Updated August 2015

Molluscum

