

DISCHARGE INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PARENTS / CARERS OF A CHILD WITH MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM



Molluscum Contagiosum (Pox Virus)

- Molluscum contagiosum is a common, relatively harmless viral infection that usually develop 2 – 8 weeks after becoming infected with the virus. It is characterised by raised, dome like pearly lesions on the skin that are round, firm and about 2-5 mm across. A tiny dimple often develops on the top of each molluscum.
- As the name suggests it spreads easily (is contagious) and can be spread to others by close personal contact with someone who has it or from objects such as shared towels or flannels.
- Molluscum are not usually painful but can be unsightly especially if occurring in large numbers on visible areas of the skin. Once one area of skin becomes affected the lesions can spread to other areas
- The average duration of Molluscum is 12-18 months although in some patients the problem can last for up to 36 months.
- The average number of Molluscum spots on a patient is about 20 although in some cases numbers can be in the hundreds.



Molluscum is more common and extensive in children with eczema or children who are taking immunosuppressive therapy.

- Occasionally they can cause itch and an eczema-like reaction (redness and scaling) can develop around the area. This can be treated with moisturiser and if itch occurs a 1% Hydrocortisone ointment can be used until itch resolves.
- The spots can become angry and look as though they are infected. This is often the body's immune response against the virus and can be managed with a little topical antiseptic. A



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scar is not usually left when the molluscum resolve spontaneously but a tiny dent or mark may remain

- Treatment recommended is usually conservative management and await natural clearing in young children. If they are persistent and troublesome other destructive alternative methods can be used although these are uncomfortable for the child. They include curettage, cryotherapy and use of topical preparations. All destructive treatments have a small risk of scarring the skin.
- To reduce the chance of passing it on to others, it is sensible not to share towels, clothes, soft toys, or bathwater.
- If attending a creche / playgroup keep lesions covered with clothing. There is no need to keep your child off school, nor should they stop swimming etc.
- After an episode of molluscum has cleared away, further infection is a rare occurrence.



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