

Molluscum Contagiosum

What is it?

Molluscum contagiosum is a common childhood skin infection caused by a virus. It looks like small bumps on the skin, which can occur anywhere on the body. The bumps are usually painless, but may become inflamed before they clear away. The bumps may be itchy and can develop eczema around them. Sometimes scratching the bumps causes a bacterial infection which appears red, hot and swollen. There may be some pus. See your doctor for antibiotics if this occurs. Molluscum contagiosum is contagious and spreads by skin-to-skin contact and through warm water. It is not harmful but it can last for several months to sometimes years. The small bumps will often heal with a small pit-like scar.



How can we treat it?

Molluscum contagiosum will eventually go away but there are some at-home treatments you can try to speed this up. Try each treatment for 2-3 months before moving on to the next one.

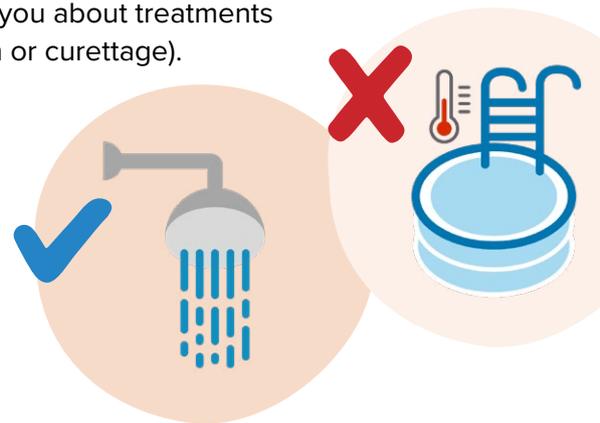
- ✓ Apply a medicated cream to the bumps every day until they become red and scaly, then stop using the cream for a few days to let it settle. Once the redness has improved, use the cream again until they look red and scaly. Keep repeating this process until all of the bumps have gone. **Today you have been prescribed:** _____
- ✓ Use a waterproof tape, like duct tape, and stick this to the bumps for 1-2 days, then pull it off. Continue to do this every few days until all the bumps have gone.



If the cream and tape options do not work, the doctor can talk to you about treatments that can be done in the clinic (such as Cantharidin, liquid nitrogen or curettage).

How can we stop it from spreading?

- ✓ Shower instead of having a bath.
- ✗ Do not swim in heated pools.
- ✗ Do not share towels or clothing.
- ✓ Keep the bumps covered with clothing.
- ✓ Moisturise all of the skin each day using a cream or ointment.
- ✓ If you have eczema, you may need a prescription steroid ointment. **Today you have been prescribed:** _____



Your skin care plan:

Want more information?

dermnetnz.org

dermcoll.edu.au/a-to-z-of-skin

This factsheet was developed as part of the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project.