

# Molluscum Contagiosum

## What is Molluscum Contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum is a type of poxvirus that affects the skin. It causes tiny bumps that have an indentation or dimple in the middle. These bumps can occur anywhere on the body, but are most often found on the trunk, the inner thighs, and the genitals.

## What are the symptoms of Molluscum?

The only symptom is typically the bumps. Sometimes the bumps can itch.

## How did I get Molluscum?

You get molluscum by coming in contact with an infected person. Molluscum is not a STD, but is often transmitted by the skin to skin contact during intercourse. Scratching or irritation to the bumps may cause them to spread.

## How are Molluscum bumps treated?

Molluscum bumps will usually resolve without treatment, but it may take several months. Many people will let them go away on their own, but you may choose to have them treated.

There are several different treatment options:

- Coring – The bump is opened and the viral material is removed. This is a very effective method. It is slightly uncomfortable, and may cause mild scarring.
- Chemical treatment – An acid is applied to the bumps. Several treatments may be needed. The areas that were treated can burn, itch, and swell, and may cause mild scarring.
- Cryotherapy – The bumps are frozen. Several treatments may be needed. The freezing can burn slightly. The bumps may itch afterwards and will sometimes blister. Rarely does it cause scarring.
- Imiquimod (Aldara) – You apply a prescription strength cream at home. The cream triggers your immune system to kill the virus. You apply it three times a week. It can take several months for the bumps to resolve with the cream. It can cause some burning and irritation at the application sites.

## What can I do after the bumps are treated?

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Use a different towel to dry other parts of your body after bathing.
- Do not scratch or shave the infected area.
- Wash your hands after touching the treated area.
- Use cold compresses and over-the-counter pain relievers to help with discomfort.