



Molluscum Contagiosum

What is molluscum?

- Molluscum contagiosum (MC) is a common skin infection in children caused by a poxvirus (molluscum contagiosum virus).
- It is spread through skin-to-skin contact and can spread between family members. It can spread from one part of the body to another, especially in children with atopic eczema.
- MC occurs most often in school-going children.
- MC presents as single or multiple, small, pearly, flesh-coloured to pink bumps. A small central depression may be seen.
- MC may occur on any area of the skin surface, but most common in areas of skin rubbing or moist regions.
- Itch, redness and scaling may develop around MC, and may herald spontaneous resolution.



Fig. 1. Molluscum contagiosum on the skin

How is molluscum treated?

- Spontaneous clearing of MC often occurs over one to two years and can be left alone, especially in younger children who may not be able to tolerate more aggressive treatments.

- Topical therapies that can be applied at home include topical imiquimod cream (Aldara), topical tretinoin cream and topical salicylic acid. These have limited effect on MC but may be attempted for a few months.
- More destructive treatment options include curettage and cryotherapy. These options may cause significant pain, and should only be attempted in older children or teenagers. Repeat treatments may be required for total clearance.
- Pricking MC lesions with a sterile needle and expressing the contents can be performed by your doctor or clinic nurse. Although this procedure is less painful than curettage and cryotherapy, it can still lead to significant trauma in younger children.
- Whatever treatment is rendered, MC lesions may recur after apparent cure.

Cryotherapy

- Liquid nitrogen, at a temperature of -196°C , is applied to the lesion, with a cotton-tipped applicator or via a spray gun, for 10 to 20 seconds.
- May be painful and therefore may not be suitable for younger patients.
- Treatment is best repeated at one to three weeks intervals.
- A blister may form at the site of cryotherapy. If the blister is small, it may be left alone. If the blister is large and painful, bring your child back to the clinic. When the blister heals, the lesion may also disappear.

Useful telephone number

Central Appointments

6294-4050



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