

Molluscum

Molluscum are benign skin growths caused by the molluscum contagiosum virus. They can appear anywhere on the body and are very common in children. Molluscum lesions appear as small, round, shiny bumps, sometimes with a central pit.

Molluscum are contagious, itchy, and spread by direct skin contact (touching a molluscum) or by touching something that touched a molluscum lesion (like towels, toys, or razors). Molluscum can also spread to other parts of your body if you pick at or scratch them. They tend to be more widespread in those with eczema, due to frequent scratching. It is important not to scratch, bite, or pick these lesions to prevent spreading.

These lesions normally resolve on their own after about two years. However, they can often worsen, spread, and even become infected, prompting treatment. Typically, treatment of molluscum begins with over-the-counter (OTC) medications including adapalene gel (Differin) or salicylic acid containing medications (Compound W® Maximum Strength Fast Acting Wart Removal Liquid). Patients should apply these medications nightly, allow them to dry, and cover them with duct tape. Duct tape helps to drive these medications deeper into the skin, while not absorbing it. Treatment with these medications often takes many weeks to months.

If OTC medications do not resolve a patient's molluscum, a dermatologist may recommend freezing them in office (cryotherapy). It may take several rounds of cryotherapy, while continuing OTC medications, for molluscum to resolve.

Additionally, there are many other topical therapies that are safe and effective for treatment of molluscum.

Speak to your dermatologist to learn more about treatment options.