

## Molluscum Contagiosum

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- Because you or your child may have been exposed to molluscum contagiosum.
- For informational purposes only.

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### General Information About Molluscum Contagiosum

#### What is molluscum contagiosum?

- Molluscum contagiosum is caused by a poxvirus that infects the top layer of skin.
- It is a common skin infection that causes round, painless bumps on the skin.
- A person who has molluscum contagiosum is more likely to spread it to other areas of their own body than to another person.

#### Who can get it?

- Anyone can get molluscum contagiosum.
- It is most common in children 1 to 10 years old.

#### What are the symptoms?

- The main symptom is the growth of small bumps on the skin. The bumps are usually flesh-colored, white, yellow, or clear, with a dimple in the center.
- Children commonly get the bumps on their face, back, chest, arms, and legs.
- Adults often get the bumps on the lower abdomen, genitals, and inner thighs.
- The bumps are usually painless, but sometimes they can itch and become inflamed.
- The bumps may last 2 to 3 months.

#### How is it spread?

- The virus is found in the bumps on the skin.
- When bumps are scratched, the virus can spread to other areas of the body, which causes more bumps to grow.
- A person can spread it to someone else if they touch the bumps on their skin and don't wash their hands, then touch someone else's skin.
- It can also be spread by sharing personal items, such as dress-up clothes, towels, and blankets.

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### How Do I Know If My Child Has Molluscum Contagiosum?

A healthcare provider can diagnose molluscum contagiosum by looking at the bumps on a person's skin. Sometimes they can take a sample of the bump and look at it under a microscope.

**If you have additional questions or are concerned your child has molluscum contagiosum, contact your healthcare provider. This fact sheet provides general information only.**

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## What If My Child Has Molluscum Contagiosum?

**Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your child has Molluscum Contagiosum.**

### How is it treated?

- The bumps usually go away on their own without scarring. All bumps generally disappear within about 6 to 18 months, but it can take up to 4 years.
- Children with scattered bumps, or a single bump, do not need to be treated.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options.

### How can I help prevent molluscum contagiosum from spreading?

- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with individuals who have the virus.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, clothing, and bars of soap.
- Wash hands often, especially after touching the bumps.
- Avoid scratching or picking at the bumps, as this spreads the bumps to other areas on the body.
- Keep bumps clean, dry, and covered with clothing or a bandage whenever possible.

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## Does My Child Need to Stay Home from Child Care?

**No.** Children who have been exposed to, or have been diagnosed with, molluscum contagiosum can continue to attend child care.

**Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.**

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### References:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- *Caring for our Children, Chapter 3 Health Promotion and Protection, 3.6 Management of Illness, 3.6.1 Inclusion/Exclusion Due to Illness*
- *Caring for our Children, Chapter 7 Infectious Diseases, 7.5 Skin and Mucous Membrane Infections, 7.5.7 Molluscum Contagiosum*
- *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Page 127*

Centers of Disease Control & Prevention

- *Molluscum Contagiosum website <https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html>*

Child Care Health Program – Public Health Seattle & King County

- *<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/child-teen-health/child-care-health/disease-prevention.aspx>. Disease Prevention Website*