

# Molluscum Contagiosum

## What is it?

- **Molluscum Contagiosum**—a viral skin infection that causes raised, pearl-like nodules or papules (1-5 mm wide) on the skin; usually no redness or irritation unless scratching or digging at the lesions, has a center or plug of white (cheesy or waxy material), usually resolves itself without scarring in 6 to 18 months; a skin rash caused by a virus, infects only humans



- **Common Sites**- abdomen, inner thigh, genitals
- **Treatment**- often goes away in months to years without treatment, if HIV may be worse case
- **Spreads**- through skin to skin contact or shared items as towels or clothing

## Symptoms:

- **Symptoms**- begins as a small, painless nodule that may become raised to a pearly, flesh colored nodule, often has a dimple in the center, may occur in lines when scratched causing the virus to spread in groups or lines called crops; lesions are painless, may itch or become irritated

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## Facts:

- **Caused by**- a virus that is a member of the poxvirus family, direct contact with the lesion (seen on the neck, face, arms, armpits, and hands, legs); can spread with towels, toys, clothing, sexual contact
- **Prevention**- avoid direct contact with skin lesions, do not share towels, toys, avoid sex (the virus can be on areas not covered by the condom), practice safe sex practices
- **Most Common**- in children ages 1 to 10 years of age
- **Viral Infection**- is on the topmost layer of the skin, once the head of the lesion is destroyed the infection is gone, the core contains the virus

## What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- for more information
  - **Surgically Removed**- de-coring, scraping, freezing, needle electro-surgery, medications to remove warts are used
- **Tests**- skin biopsy

