

Molluscum contagiosum

What is Molluscum contagiosum?

It consists of benign infectious lesions produced by a virus belonging to the Poxvirus family.

It primarily affects children (between 1 and 10 years old), although it can affect people at any age.

In adults it is considered a sexually transmitted infection (STI), especially if the lesions are located in the pubic area, thighs, or abdomen.

The lesions can appear between 2 and 8 weeks after infection, although this period can be prolonged up to 6 months.

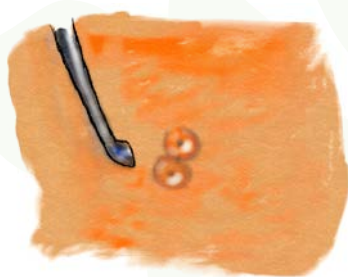
What do the lesions look like?

They resemble visible pimples, pink or white in color, or skin color, with a dimple in the center. They can appear grouped together. Generally, they are asymptomatic, but at times they can be itchy, and can appear anywhere on the body.



How is it diagnosed?

Normally, the diagnosis is clinical.



What are the available treatment options?

They can clear up spontaneously within 6-18 months, or they can be treated with:

- Topical treatments containing potassium hydroxide, salicylic acid, hydrogen peroxide, benzoyl peroxide or imiquimod 5% cream, amongst others.
- Cryotherapy
- Curettage or manual extrusion

In children, one option is to not apply any form of treatment, keeping in mind that they will clear up spontaneously. This depends on the number of lesions, their location, discomfort, etc.

In adults, when an STI is suspected, it is treated to prevent infection.

What precautions are necessary to avoid infection or promote healing?

- To prevent the lesions from spreading, scratching or shaving the affected area should be avoided.
- In order to not infect other people, direct contact with the lesion and sharing objects such as toys, towels, sponges or clothes should also be avoided.
- To go to school, play team sports or activities that could bring about contact with the lesions, it is necessary to completely cover the area with clothes or bandages.
- In case of accidental contact with the lesions, the person who does not have molluscum should thoroughly wash their hands and exposed area.
- Sexual intercourse should be avoided if the lesions are found in the anogenital area or in high contact areas.
- In adults who present with potential STI lesions, a blood test needs to be done to rule out other infections. It is not necessary to test their contacts.