


NOTTINGHAM SUPPORT GROUP FOR CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH ECZEMA

In association with : Nottingham University Hospitals 
NHS Trust

Written by Professor Hywel Williams, Dr Ruth Murphy, Dr Jane Ravenscroft, Nurse Consultant Sandra Lawton and parents on behalf of the Nottingham Support Group for Carers of Children with Eczema.

Molluscum Contagiosum - Information for Parents

What is Molluscum Contagiosum?

Molluscum Contagiosum is a viral skin infection. Mollusca are small skin coloured or pink shiny bumps on the skin that often form in little clusters. Mollusca are a common and harmless infection affecting the top layers of the skin. The mollusca are similar to warts, but so not usually least as long. Typically, a single molluscum lasts anything from 6-18 months, although new ones can continue to appear for a year or so. They usually affect children between the ages of 4-8 years.

Are they contagious?

Yes, but only in a mild sense. Direct skin-to-skin contact is needed to spread the virus and usually this only happens between young children of a susceptible age. Occasionally, adults get mollusca but this is usually because they are taking a medicine which suppresses their immune system. Children who get molluscum contagiosum are perfectly healthy. Children with childhood eczema may be more prone to getting persistent mollusca.

Is Molluscum Contagiosum serious?

No. It is a harmless infection of the skin which sorts itself out and has nothing to do with cancer or any serious illnesses in children. Eventually, most people develop immunity to the molluscum virus. Children tend to get mollusca more than adults because they have not developed their own immunity to the virus.

How does it affect people?

Mollusca usually do not bother children at all. Sometimes, they can be itchy or they may bleed when the child gives them a good scratch. This is nothing to worry about and in fact, a good scratch may help the virus to disappear more quickly from the skin.

Will they go away?

Yes. Most mollusca disappear within 6-18 months although odd stubborn ones can last longer. Typically, a child will have a patch of mollusca on one area of the body. Some disappear as new ones appear, until eventually the whole infection burns itself out as the child develops his/her own immunity against the molluscum virus. Sometimes, one or two of the mollusca may become large and red and look as if they are infected. Although mollusca can get infected, swelling and redness is usually a sign that the body's immune system is getting rid of them naturally. Your child does not need antibiotics when this happens.

Do they need to be treated?

No, because they go away on their own without leaving a scar. Destructive methods such as freezing them with liquid nitrogen or pricking them and squeezing out the contents can be used, but these methods can be painful and sometimes cause scarring. Our view at this clinic is that it is cruel to treat children for mollusca unless they are unusually large or persistent and your child is asking us for treatment. The best treatment is to do nothing and let the body's immune system get rid of them naturally.

For further advice please contact
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For advice on support issues please contact the NSGCCE via the website www.nottinghameczema.org.uk and click on the contact icon



at the top of most pages or email us at

enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk

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