



## **MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM**

### **What is Molluscum Contagiosum?**

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection caused by a poxvirus. It is a virus that lives in the skin. A molluscum skin infection usually appears 1 to 3 months after you are exposed to the virus. The virus can last on your body from 6 months to 2 years.

### **How is it transmitted?**

- Skin-to-skin contact
- Wet towels, gym equipment and tanning beds
- Sexual contact
- It can be spread to other parts of the body when you scratch the bumps and then touch another body part

### **What are the symptoms?**

- Molluscum causes small, smooth, pearly white or flesh-colored hard bumps with a pitted or dimpled centre.
- You can have one or a group of bumps anywhere on the body.
- In sexually active people, these bumps may be found on the genitals, inner thighs, or abdomen.
- Molluscum usually appears 1 to 3 months after you are exposed to the virus.
- The bumps can last from 6 months to 2 years. Once the bumps are gone so is the virus.
- If scratched, the bumps can become infected with bacteria and may be tender or red.

### **How is it treated?**

The bumps will usually go away on their own in 6 to 12 months. Very rarely, bumps will stay up to 2 years. Molluscum can be treated by freezing with liquid nitrogen or applying a prescription cream.

### **How do I get tested?**

A health care professional diagnoses molluscum after examining the skin.

### **Remember:**

Any infection in the genital area may increase the risk of becoming infected with HIV. Practicing safer sex, by using latex or polyurethane condoms and/or oral dams for anal, oral or vaginal sex can reduce the risk of sexually transmitted or blood borne infections (STBBIs).

Call the **Aids and Sexual Health Info line** at 1-800-668-2437 if you have questions or need help.

For more information on molluscum, please consult this website:

**Sexual Health Centre**

179 Clarence St,

Ottawa. ON K1N5P7

**613-234-4641 | TTY: 613-580-9656**

[Ottawapublichealth.ca](http://Ottawapublichealth.ca)