

Are there any complications with molluscum contagiosum?

- There are no serious complications.
- The lesions can become infected and become more itchy or red and painful. This can also be a side effect of the treatments.
- Unfortunately it is common for them to come back – this happens for about 30% of people.



Contact us

Phone 0800 739 432 Monday to Friday to book your appointment at one of the Auckland Sexual Health Clinics or visit our website www.ashs.org.nz for more information around opening hours

Locations

Greenlane Clinical Centre
Building 7 Level 3
Greenlane West

North Shore
418 Glenfield Rd
Glenfield

South Auckland
652 Great South Road, Manukau
(Southpoint)

West Auckland
20 Sel Peacock Drive
Henderson

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on disease. It is not intended to replace the need for an appointment with your doctor. People are strongly advised to check with their healthcare provider about any specific questions or concerns. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct

Te Whatu Ora
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Auckland Sexual Health
Services

**Molluscum
contagiosum**

What is molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum is a skin infection caused by the molluscum contagiosum virus (a pox virus).

It causes small firm skin-coloured bumps (lesions) with waxy white centres can appear anywhere on the body but are common on the genitals (groin area), thighs or lower tummy. They can be confused with genital warts or pimples.

They usually affect children, adults who are having sex and people with a suppressed immune system.

How do I know if I have molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum don't usually cause pain, but they can sometimes be itchy. They usually appear within about 2-3 months after you become infected. Without any treatment they can stay there for 6 months to 2 years.

Most people will clear them within a year (without treatment). But for some people they will come back again. Not everyone who is in contact with the virus, will get the infection either.

People with a suppressed immune system, may have problems with lesions being widespread and less responsive to treatment.

How is molluscum contagiosum transmitted?

- It is spread by close skin-to-skin contact, which can happen during sex or other times.
- It can be passed on by clothing or towels.
- It can also be spread from one part of the body to another by scratching
- Broken bumps should be covered with a plaster if possible. Try not to shave/pop the bumps as this will spread the virus

How is molluscum contagiosum treated?

- Treatment is usually done because of how they look (as the bumps may resolve by themselves usually within 1 year)
- It can be treated by removing the centre with a clean needle or by freezing or burning the lesions.
- Imiquimod (Aldara) cream can also be used as prescribed by a doctor.

Will sexual partner/s also have molluscum contagiosum?

They may or may not have them. But we recommend that anyone with any unexplained lumps/bumps or itching, should see a nurse or doctor for a check-up. It is also a good idea for you and your partner to have general sexual health check-ups for other infections.