MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

Description
A contagious virus infection of the skin anywhere on the body. The virus usually occurs on the face in children, but may appear on chest, arms, legs and tends to spread on areas where friction rubbing occurs.

Frequent Signs and Symptoms
Papules (small, raised bumps on the skin) with the following characteristics:
- Bumps are firm, smooth, domed with a central pit, and skin-colored or white. The overlying skin is transparent and thin.
- Bumps are usually 2 mm to 3 mm in diameter. A few may be as large as 10 mm.
- Bumps cause eye irritation if they are on the eyelids.
- Bumps don’t hurt or itch.

Causes
DNA virus of the pox group. The incubation is 2 weeks to 6 months. The bumps usually spontaneously resolve in 6 months – 2 years.

Risk Increase With
- Previous allergies or family history of allergy
- Use of immunosuppressive drugs
- Eczema

Preventive Measures
To prevent spread to other parts of the body or to other people, don’t scratch bumps

Expected Outcomes
If untreated, a few papules may increase to 20 to 50 lesions in several weeks. They will disappear spontaneously in 10 to 24 months. However, they may be treated to prevent their spread to other persons.

Possible Complications
Scarring or disfigurement

Treatment
General Measures
- Treatment can be painful and bumps will resolve spontaneously so often treatment is not recommended.
- Medical treatment to remove the papules with liquid nitrogen (sometimes).
- After treatment with liquid nitrogen, leave the blisters alone. The tops will come off spontaneously in 7 to 14 days.
- Keep blisters dry. Cover with small adhesive bandages any that may be irritated by clothing.
**Medications**
Medicine usually is not necessary for this disorder. In some cases, cantharidin (Cantharone) or other topical medication to kill the virus may be prescribed.

**Activity**
No restrictions, it may spread from person to person by direct contact, so if possible keep bumps covered (i.e. by clothing or Band-Aids)

**Diet**
No special diet.

**Notify Our Office If**
- You or a family member has symptoms of molluscum contagiosum.
- The following occur after treatment
- Fever
- Signs of infection (swelling, redness, pain, tenderness or warmth) at the treatment site.