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MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM



## MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

**Synonyms:** *Molluscum epitheliale, seu sebaceum, seu verrucosum; Epithelioma molluscum, seu contagiosum; Acne varioliformis.*

Mollusca contagiosa begin as pin-head sized, semi-globular, waxy, pinkish yellow growths which appear most commonly in children and about the face or genitals, though they may occur anywhere except upon the palms and soles. The nodules grow slowly until they are the size of a pea or larger, and occasionally older lesions become somewhat pedunculated. On the surface of each one a central depression marks the mouth of a follicle from which a cheesy secretion can be expressed, or inspissated secretion may project through and plug the opening. A single molluscum is rare, generally there are eight or ten, and often a crop of smaller recent lesions about an older one. The growths

may persist for months or even years to disappear finally by absorption or to become inflamed and discharge their contents. There are no subjective symptoms. The prognosis is favorable. Undoubtedly the disease is contagious, although the pathogenic factor is not yet known. The appearance of the growths is so peculiar and characteristic that when they have been once seen and recognized there is never any subsequent difficulty in diagnosis. **TREATMENT:** Mollusca may be easily and permanently removed without scarring by means of a sharp curette. Each tumor should be scraped off and its base then cauterized with carbolic acid or silver nitrate. Many of the lesions will not return after simple expression of their cheesy secretion and the introduction of a caustic into the cyst cavities.