

# Molluscum Contagiosum



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Molluscum Contagiosum (MC) is a common viral infection of the outer layer of skin. It is spread via benign contact in children. Most adolescents and adults are immune due to prior exposure. This infection causes tiny bumps on the skin. The molluscum virus is good at hiding from the immune system. Untreated, MC can last for up to 3 years. Even with treatment the bumps may take several months to go away. Many treatments for MC can be painful and unpleasant for smaller children. But, your child's age makes them a good candidate for treatment with medicines applied on the skin.

## Treatment using Retinoids

Retinoids are derivatives of Vitamin A. Tretinoin (Retin-A) cream and Adapalene (Differin) cream/gel are FDA approved for treatment of acne. These products have been used safely 'off label' by pediatric dermatologist for many years. The medication works by helping the immune system see the virus in the skin. Once this happens, the immune system will attack the Molluscum. They will become red and start to go away slowly. The medicines are effective in approximately 2 of 3 children treated.

## Medication Options!

If your doctor prescribed Tretinoin (Retin-A)/Adapalene (Differin) and the product is not covered by your insurance plan, please obtain Differin gel over-the-counter and use as described in this handout.

## How to use Tretinoin (Retin-A)/Adapalene (Differin)

- Squeeze a small amount (about the size of a mustard seed) of cream onto the non-fuzzy end of a Q-tip that you have cut in half or onto the blunt end of a toothpick and put it on each bump.
- Use the medicine once or twice a day, as directed by your doctor.
- Continue this treatment on each bump until it begins to look irritated and red. This may take up to 2 months. Once the bump becomes very red, stop treating it. This means that the medicine is doing its job and the bump will start to go away. You may keep treating any remaining bumps that are not red and start treating any new bumps that you see. It is not unusual to see new bumps early in the treatment course.
- If your child has severe irritation, stop the cream for 2-3 days, than start using it every other day.
- Some children get an itchy, eczema-like rash around the bumps. This is a sign that immunity is developing and the bumps will start going away. The rash can be treated with Vaseline. If Vaseline does not make the rash go away, you may also try hydrocortisone ointment (available over-the-counter).



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**Remember we are only a call/text call away!**