

Molluscum, What's That?

If you have never heard of Molluscum, consider yourself lucky! And now, consider yourself informed... molluscum is something you should know about if you have a child because it is very common. Molluscum is a skin infection caused by the pox virus. Similar to chicken pox, once you acquire the virus, you most likely have developed immunity and will not develop it again. So, what is it?

Last year, our oldest daughter who has eczema, developed some pinkish, flesh-colored, pearly bumps on the backs of her knees, on top of her red eczema patches. The bumps were multiplying and causing discomfort as they itched and grew larger. Our daughter was putting bandaids over the bumps and wearing tights to hide them from the kids at school who were making fun of her. Poor kid.

So, we paid a trip to the pediatrician to find out what was going on. We left the doctor's office with a prescription for anti-itch cream and a diagnosis of severe eczema. I knew there was something that wasn't right here, call it mother's intuition, but eczema never looked like this before! I tried to do some research on the internet, but never found anything that looked exactly like my daughter's bumps.

A few weeks passed and we finally took our daughter to our wonderful next door neighbor's house to see if she could help us out. Monica Dahlem is one of the best dermatologists in the city and we happen to share a gate between our backyards, so that our children can run between our yards and play. Monica immediately knew what these bumps were. "I think that is molluscum." she said. So, we arranged to visit her office and have the bumps treated. Most doctors will tell you to wait the virus out and that it will go away on it's own, but because our daughter had eczema and the bumps were red and oozing, we needed to treat them so she would not get an infection.

Dr. Dahlem scraped the top off of each one of the bumps to release the virus and then cleaned each spot afterwards. She gave us an antibiotic cream so that the open sores would not get infected and a few weeks later, our oldest daughter was on her way to being molluscum free.

I have noticed that the bumps seemed to get worse and multiply when our daughter would go into a pool. This is where the virus is most likely contracted and spread. So, if your child has molluscum, please do not let them swim in a public pool as other people will contract the virus. The virus is also spread from casual contact and indirect contact, such as with towels. So, don't share a towel with someone who has molluscum, unless you want those lovely bumps on your legs! If your child has molluscum, wash your hands after any contact with the bumps and keep your child's nails short and hands washed so they don't spread the virus or get infections.

If you suspect your child has molluscum, call the pediatrician or dermatologist and have it examined. If they do in fact have the virus, keep them in long clothing and do not let them bathe with others or share towels. The virus should pass within a few weeks to a few months, so hang in there and wash your hands often!!!