

## “What are these bumps on my arms?”

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A seven-year-old female presents with slightly pruritic papules on her arms and axillae. She is otherwise healthy and has no fever.

### What is your diagnosis?

Molluscum contagiosum is a viral infection (poxvirus) found only in human skin. These are flesh-to-pink coloured dome-shaped papules with central depression. There are four types of molluscum contagiosum virus (MCV), with MCV-1 most common in children and MCV-2 most common in adults (via sexual transmission). Children between age two-to-12 are most prone to acquiring MCV.

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The virus is spread through direct contact and shared clothing. The incubation period is anywhere from one week to six months, with an average incubation of six weeks. The diagnosis is clinical, although occasionally a biopsy is performed which shows



Figure 1. Flesh-to-pink coloured dome-shaped papules with central depression.

characteristic Henderson-Patterson bodies. In 10% of cases, eczema can develop around MCV. The virus itself does not scar, though picking or scratching can result in infection or scarring. MCV typically lasts several months and even up to 18 months or longer, in some cases. Management can include:

- benign neglect,
- topical salicylic acid,
- topical tretinoin,
- imiquimod,
- cantharidin,
- liquid nitrogen cryotherapy, or
- curettage.

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