

WHEN YOU ARE TREATED FOR MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

What is molluscum contagiosum?

Molluscum contagiosum, or mollusca, is among the five most prevalent skin diseases worldwide. Molluscum contagiosum is caused by an infection with a harmless virus (poxvirus) in the top skin layer, which is transferred by skin-to-skin contact. Mollusca develop gradually over a span of 2-8 weeks after you have been infected.

Mollusca are skin-coloured, smooth, pearl-like changes with a small central dimple of 3-10 mm. Mollusca contain viscous material.

Mollusca are mostly seen in children of all ages, typically on the legs, torso and face, often in body creases. In sexually active persons, mollusca typically occur on the lower belly and in intimate areas. Immunosuppressed persons often have larger and more mollusca on their skin.

Mollusca may disappear spontaneously after 6-9 months, but may persist for longer. Some people may experience eczema and itching from mollusca, resulting in bacterial infection in the skin. If you scratch your mollusca, it may leave a small scar, resembling a chickenpox scar. Some may also perceive mollusca as cosmetically unsightly and seek treatment for it.

What is cryosurgery?

One of the most efficient therapies for removing molluscum contagiosum is to destroy the infected layer of skin by freezing, also called cryosurgery. Cryosurgery has been used for treatment of skin changes for more than 100 years. Cryo is the Greek word for "cold", and surgery is derived from the Greek word kheirourgia meaning "working by hand".

Freezing the infected layer of skin without damaging the healthy skin below is possible because the thin top layer of skin is more sensitive to changes in temperature than the deeper layers of skin.



Treatment with cryosurgery

Hydrozid® is a cryosurgical treatment for molluscum contagiosum, among other uses.

The treatment involves spraying the pressurised gas norflurane on the skin lesion at a temperature of approx. -50°C, thereby destroying the infected skin layer.

Even cryosurgery may require repeated treatment. In these cases, you are recommended to receive treatment again after 1-2 weeks, depending on your therapist's assessment.

During treatment

There is no need for anaesthesia during treatment.

Hydrozid® will be sprayed directly on the molluscum. The frozen area will immediately be visible as a snow-white section. When the molluscum is no longer white, the area that was frozen will have thawed, and the treatment can be repeated. If you receive treatment for several mollusca, they can be treated at the same time. The treatment takes less than 30 seconds for each molluscum.

Treatment with such cold temperatures may cause a slight stinging or burning sensation while the molluscum is being frozen. This sensation will subside when treatment stops.

After treatment

The treated area may be slightly irritated, red, tender and swollen immediately after treatment. These symptoms are a natural part of wound healing. Small blisters may subsequently occur in the treated area in rare instances.

Keep the treated area clean by washing it daily with water and non-perfumed soap. You can protect the treated area with a plaster.

The newly formed skin in the treated area is thin, and as a result gets sunburned more quickly. Therefore, use sunscreen when you are out in daylight to avoid sunburn and permanent discoloration in the treated area.

Inform your therapist!

For a small number of patients, cryosurgery must be used with caution.

You must therefore let your therapist know if you:

- suffer from poor circulation, for instance due to diabetes.
- have been treated with adrenocortical hormone or inhaled steroids for a prolonged period of time.
- suffer from cryoglobulinemia, Raynaud's disease, cold urticaria or blood dyscrasias.