**MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM**:

**What is the diagnosis and how did my child get this?**

Your child's diagnosis is called: Molluscum contagiosum.

This is a harmless viral skin infection that is spread by contact with others, and it most often affects preschool or young elementary school-aged children or those who come in frequent contact with them.

**How long does it take to go away and what can I do to treat it?**

The average time to clearance of molluscum by the immune system is approximately 18 months. Unfortunately, there have been no treatments that have been shown to be effective in speeding up the clearance of this viral infection, and we therefore wait for the child's immune system to eradicate the virus.

**What kind of complications can my child have from molluscum?**

Typically the molluscum lesions clear up without any complications. However, in some cases, the lesions can become infected. Please try to keep them clean and refrain from picking, scratching, or manipulating them to prevent a staph infection. In some cases, your doctor may recommend or prescribe an antibiotic ointment to treat or prevent such infections. Occasionally, we see the lesions become inflamed (red, enlarged) or develop surrounding eczema (red, scaly, itchy rash). If this is the case, your doctor may prescribe a medicine to help with this rash and make your child more comfortable. This medicine will not, however, clear the molluscum itself and should not be applied unless there is surrounding eczema or irritated skin. Often, this inflammation or eczema response may occur towards the end of the molluscum course, and can be a sign that the child's immune system is working on clearing the virus.

**What kind of follow up is needed?**

Typically, molluscum requires no follow up, as there are no particularly effective treatments. However, please call our office if you have concerns about infection of the molluscum lesions. Signs of infection might include pain, expanding redness around the area, a pus-bump, drainage of pus, or warmth or tenderness to the touch, as well as fevers and chills in some cases. If itchy eczema-type rashes develop around the molluscum lesions, you may also call us to discuss the possibility of having a steroid ointment prescribed.