



Cantharidin Instructions and Expectations

Cantharidin is a synthetic protein, derived from a blistering beetle. We use cantharidin most commonly to treat molluscum contagiosum, a common childhood viral infection of the skin.

Molluscum lesions are contagious and spread best in wet skin environments. Cover affected areas when at a swimming pool. Bathe young children separately.

In the office, a small amount of cantharidin is applied to each lesion. Once there is redness or irritation, you should wash the area(s) where the cantharidin was applied using soap and water typically in 6-8 hours. In the hours to days after application, red blisters may appear around each lesion, this is a normal response.

In addition, itch, discomfort, and/or pain are possible. For itch, discomfort, or pain, apply OTC hydrocortisone 1% ointment twice a day as needed to affected areas.

Beginning the day after treatment, use a heavy cream (Vanicream, CeraVe, Cetaphil, or Aveeno) as moisturizer head to toe after showering/bathing to keep skin well moisturized. You should continue using moisturizer in this fashion daily.

Moisturizing will help the blisters and crusting. In addition, it will help fade post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH). PIH is the shadow left over after the treatment at each site.

Multiple treatments will likely be necessary to resolve all lesions, usually every 4-6 weeks.