



# MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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## VASCULAR BIRTHMARKS

Your baby's vascular birthmark is not uncommon. In fact, about 40% of babies are born with one or develop one in the first few weeks of life. The vast majority is harmless, and will disappear without treatment. Almost all birthmarks fall into one of three categories. t.

1) **Strawberry hemangiomas** are raised, bright red areas on the surface of the skin or bluish-red soft swellings just under the skin surface. Some babies are born with strawberry hemangiomas, but more often they appear when the baby is a few weeks old. They grow rapidly during the first six months, slow down between 6 months and one year of age, and then begin very gradually to shrink away.

In about one third of cases, the hemangioma is gone by three years of age. Half are gone by age five, and almost all (90%) disappear by age nine. Strawberry hemangiomas very rarely require treatment. If your child's hemangioma is in the diaper area or in a spot where clothing rubs it, you may need to use protective dressings and antibiotic creams. We will give you instructions if that should be necessary. Hemangiomas that grow very rapidly, or interfere with vital structures like the eye, can be treated with medications. Surgery is very rarely needed.

2) **Salmon patches** are flat, pink areas on the face or the back of the neck. Those on the face usually disappear by the time the child is one year old, although they may reappear briefly during periods of crying or vigorous activity, then fade out again when the child calms down. This effect is more likely in children with fair skin. Salmon patches on the back of the neck don't always go away, but they are usually concealed by the child's hair.

3) **Port-wine stains** are flat, pink or reddish-purple areas on the skin that are usually present at birth. This type of birthmark will not resolve spontaneously.. A laser treatment for this condition has been very successful in certain instances and can be used even in very young infants. Port-wine stains can also be camouflaged with special make-up