

## What does having a red birthmark mean

Many babies have birthmarks when they are born. Some birthmarks appear in the first few weeks of life. These marks can be red, pink, brown, tan or blue. There is no way to prevent birthmarks. They are not inherited, and very little is known about how they occur. Most are benign and fade in early childhood. Some birthmarks, however, may be more dramatic and cause cosmetic problems, or even be precursors to cancer. There are two major categories of birthmarks: pigmented and red. Red birthmarks can range from tiny, pink dots to large, deep-red marks. Red birthmarks are caused by blood vessels very close to the surface of the skin, and are also called vascular birthmarks. There are two types of vascular birthmarks or stains are sometimes known as stork bites or angel's kisses. They are extremely common in newborns and are caused by capillaries (small blood vessels) that are visible through the skin. These tiny, pink marks are most often found on the forehead, eyelids and back of the neck. They require no treatment and usually fade as the baby grows. Hemangiomas Hemangiomas, known as strawberry birthmarks, are also very common. Most are small and harmless. The red color and slightly raised appearance are caused by a large number of blood vessels that are closely packed at the surface of the skin. They usually appear around the face, neck, scalp or chest, and are more common in females. Nearly all strawberry birthmarks disappear by age 9.Larger hemangiomas are known as a cavernous hemangiomas. They appear as a red or blue mass of tissue filled with blood. Some of these lesions will disappear as a child grows. The birthmark commonly known as a port-wine stain is a flat hemangioma or nevus flammeus. It occurs in 3 out of every 1,000 infants. Port-wine stains are purplish discolorations and are caused by dilated blood capillaries. Port-wine stains sometimes are. Aside from concealing cosmetics, treatment options include cryotherapy (freezing) surgery, surgical removal or laser surgery. Pigmented Pigmented birthmarks are areas of skin where the color is different from the color of the rest of the skin. Commonly called café-au-lait (since they are usually light tan spots), these are normal birthmarks and are usually not indicative of other problems. However, if you have several café-au-lait spots that are larger than the size of an American quarter, they might indicate neurofibromatosis — a genetic disease that causes abnormal cell growth of nerve tissues — and should be examined by a doctor. Sometimes, moles called nevi appear after birth, and they're no problem. But nevi that are present at birth could indicate an increased risk of skin cancer (melanoma), especially if the moles are very large. This is a type of birthmark that should be carefully observed over time by a doctor. Children with darker skin coloration may have a birthmark called Mongolian spots. These are bluish spots, usually on the lower back or buttocks, that look like (and are sometimes mistaken for) bruises. They usually fade over time. For more information, see the links below. Related Articles All About BirthmarksFact or Fiction: HemangiomasHow to Identify a Skin RashAmerican Academy of Dermatology: Vascular Birthmarks are common. Research shows that about 10% of babies are born with a type of birthmark known as a hemangioma (he-man-gio-ma). Fortunately, most hemangiomas go away on their own by the time a child is 10 years old. Many disappear sooner. Babies may be more likely to have a hemangioma if they are: PrematureLess than 5-1/2 pounds at birthFemaleWhiteBorn with a sibling (twin, triplet, etc.) Birthmarks that cause a brown mark on the skin, such as moles and café-au-lait (café-oh-lay) spots, are also common. About 1 in 100 babies has a small mole. Larger moles are less common birthmark. Asians are most likely to be born with one of these spots. Mongolian spots are less common in other races. While some babies have a greater risk of developing certain birthmarks, there's no way to know whether a baby will have a birthmark? Different types of birthmarks have different causes. Before explaining these causes, it's important to put some superstitions to rest.Birthmarks don't form because a pregnant woman ignores a food craving, touches her belly while worried, or eats certain foods. These are myths.We still don't know exactly why birthmarks develop, but here's what scientists have learned so far. Sometimes, a birthmark runs in a family like this salmon patch, which has nearly faded on the older sister. The cause varies with the type of birthmark. Some birthmarks form when blood vessels do not form properly. This can cause your baby to have one of the following birthmarks: Strawberry hemangiomaDeep hemangiomaPort-wine stainSalmon patchOther birthmarks appear when cells that give our skin color, melanocytes (meh-lan-oh-cites), clump together. That's why newborns develops when parts of the skin overgrow. You cannot prevent these things from happening by satisfying every food craving or keeping your hands off your belly while worried. So, it's okay to ignore that desire for a turkey sandwich at 2:00 a.m. Related AAD resourceHeart medicine can clear strawberry birthmarksImage Image used with permission of the American Academy of Dermatology National Library of Dermatologic Teaching Slides.References Barnhill RG and Rabinovitz H. "Benign melanocytic neoplasms." In: Bolognia JL, et al. Dermatology. (second edition). Mosby Elsevier, Spain, 2008:1713,1720-3. Enjolras O. "Vascular malformations." In: Bolognia JL, et al. Dermatology. (second edition). 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