



## Birthmarks

Common skin discolorations of newborns

A baby's skin coloring can vary greatly, depending upon the baby's age, race or ethnic group, temperature, and whether or not the baby is crying. Skin color in babies often changes with both the environment and health.

### Various Types of Birthmarks

#### Cafe Au Lait Spots

These permanent birthmarks, which vary in size and are light brown or coffee colored, occur most commonly on the baby's torso, arms and legs. If more than six spots are present and are greater than 1.5 centimeters in diameter, have your health care provider assess your baby for potential health problems. These spots persist throughout life and may increase in number with age.

#### Cavernous

Strawberry hemangioma – a red, rubbery nodule with a roughened surface – is a strawberry nevus. The lesion is often not present at birth but may appear as a permanent blanched area on the skin that is replaced by red nodules at 2 to 4 weeks of age. Fifty percent resolve spontaneously by age 5; 70 percent by age 7; 90 percent by age 9; and the rest by adolescence.

#### Congenital Nevi

Large moles that are present at birth are congenital nevi or giant hairy nevi and may increase your risk of malignant melanoma, a deadly form of skin cancer. Moles that are more than 8 inches in diameter pose the greatest risk. Have your health care provider examine any mole that is present at birth.

#### Mongolian Spots (blue gray macula of infancy)

Mongolian spots are extremely common birthmarks. These large blue-gray or blue-black birthmarks sometimes resemble bruises. They are more common in dark-skinned babies, appearing on the lower back and legs. They often become less conspicuous with age but do not disappear completely.

#### Port Wine Stains

Port wine stains are dark red or purple areas (maculas) appearing on one side of the face or on an arm or leg. Infants as young as 3 months of age have been treated successfully with laser treatment to remove the stain.

*Continued on back page*

### Salmon Patches or Stork Bites

Stork bites are reddish or pink patches often found above the hairline at the back of the neck, on the eyelids or between the baby's eyes. These marks are caused by collections of capillary blood vessels close to the skin. They usually fade within the first two years of life.

