

HEMANGIOMAS

What is it?

A hemangioma is a collection of extra blood vessels in the skin. It is often considered a “birthmark” but they usually don’t appear until the baby is a few days or weeks old. Most are superficial red bumps on the baby’s skin, but some have a deeper blue/purple component.

Hemangiomas grow during for the first 3-12 months, and then slowly involute or decrease in size over the next few years. Most are gone by ~4 years of age. Some hemangiomas, especially those with deeper component, may take longer to involute. For some people, a pale area or scar may remain their whole life.

Diagnosis

Most can be diagnosed by history and physical examination. Your pediatrician may order an ultrasound if they are worried about another type of vascular anomaly. In rare cases, your doctor may need to order a blood test.

Complications

- Ulceration or bleeding may occur, especially in the first few months
- Skin changes sometimes remain after the hemangiomas completely involute including a pale area, visible blood vessels, or fatty deposit
- Scarring or deformity is rare, but more common if the hemangioma is on lip, ear, nares, nasal tip, and eyelid, or has ulcerated

Treatment

Not all hemangiomas need treatment, as they will resolve on their own. Your pediatrician may refer you to the ACH Vascular Birthmark clinic to discuss treatment options if the hemangiomas are:

- Multiple (>5)
- Large (>5cm)
- On the face, especially on lip, ear, nares, nasal tip, “beard area”, eyelid or near the eye
- Overlying the spine or near the anus