

# GATEWAY

AESTHETIC INSTITUTE & LASER CENTER

## LASER BIRTHMARK, PORT-WINE STAIN & MOLE TREATMENT



### **Tell me about Port-wine stain and pigmented birthmarks?**

Vascular birthmarks, such as Port-wine stains, are caused by a high concentration of blood vessels in the birthmark area. Swollen vessels cause a reddish-purplish discoloration of the skin. This type of birthmark occurs in about 3 out of every 1,000 people.

Pigmented birthmarks, such as coffee-and-cream (cafe-au-lait), are spots or patches of skin that are irregularly shaped, flat and darker than the surrounding skin. They are usually a tan color, the color of coffee with cream. The borders of such birthmarks may be smooth or irregular.

### **What causes birthmarks and abnormal pigmented skin patches?**

Birthmarks occur when an area of the skin does not develop normally before birth. Pigmented birthmarks, for example, may develop with increased pigment cells, nevus cells (cells seen in moles), increased hair, Melasma, and Epidermal nevus (a warty linear growth). Vascular birthmarks develop with higher than normal concentrations of blood vessels.

### **What are the risks of birthmarks?**

Some pigmented birthmarks have a greater risk of becoming a deadly melanoma skin cancer. Always check with a dermatologist and have a biopsy performed on any birthmark that is abnormal in appearance or changes color. Such precautions could prevent deadly skin cancer.

### **How are birthmarks treated?**

One option is to remove the birthmark surgically and then sew the normal skin together. This option is only practical for smaller birthmarks, moles and abnormal skin pigment patches. A second option is to use a laser to lighten the skin pigment in areas where it is abnormal. While not every pigmented birthmark can be completely removed, at the Gateway Aesthetic Institute & Laser Center, we have multiple lasers and

years of experience that assure optimal results.

### **Is there any danger to the surrounding skin when treating a birthmark with a laser?**

With today's remarkable new technology there is little to no damage to the surrounding skin.

### **How long do the treatments take?**

The length and number of treatments will depend on the size and extent of the patient's particular birthmark. Laser treatment may take anywhere from several minutes to as long as an hour. Treatments of port-wine birthmarks may require multiple procedures spaced several months apart.

### **What causes moles?**

In most cases, moles are hereditary. Some families have a risk of malignant moles or melanomas. If you have moles, especially darkly pigmented moles, we recommend a complete skin check at least once a year.

### **Should I have my moles removed?**

You should have your moles removed if your doctor thinks they may turn cancerous. Many people also choose to have their moles removed for convenience and appearance.

### **How are moles removed?**

The most common method of removing a mole is surgical excision. Small benign moles may also be removed with a laser.

### **Is treatment painful?**

When a laser is used to remove or lighten birthmarks or moles, most patients report

little or no discomfort during the procedure. If desired, the area can be treated with local anesthetic.

### **What are the risks associated with laser birthmark & mole removal treatment?**

Minor bruising, bleeding and scabbing may occur, but is not common. Unexpected deepening or lightening of skin coloration may also occur, but such side effects are very rare and easily treated with a secondary corrective procedure.

### **How do I know if my birthmark or mole can be treated?**

At the Gateway Aesthetic Institute and Laser Center, we have treated thousands of patients seeking removal of their birthmarks or moles.

Call Gateway Aesthetic Institute & Laser Center at (801) 595-1600 to schedule a consultation.

We are located at the south end of the Gateway Mall in Salt Lake City at 440 West 200 South, Suite 250, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101.

