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- Venular Malformations (Port Wine Stains) are always present at birth and can range from pale pink to dark purple in color. They are sometimes referred to as nevus flammeus. In the past these lesions were erroneously called "capillary hemangiomas."
- Port Wine Stains (PWS) occur in .3% of births and occur equally among males and females.
- Laser therapy, which is used to remove a port wine stain, in most cases is temporary. Since the deficiency is in the nervous system, in time the blood will re-pool in the affected area and the birthmark will once again appear.
- Once a Port Wine Stain is lasered, it is important at the first sign of reoccurrence to have one or two treatments to keep it faded. The individual will need to have maintenance laser treatments for life.
- Because Port Wine Stains can be progressive, treatment should be done early to prevent cobbling of the skin, thickening, and darkening of the stain. These lesions vary from low-grade to high-grade, pale to dark. Low-grade lesions progress at a slower rate than high-grade. Thickening of the gums and lips can also result from growth of a port wine stain. Debulking of the lip may be necessary.
- Port wine stains occur most often on the face, but can be on any part of the body. Port wine stains covering the eyelid (or very near the eye or on the forehead) can be associated with elevated eye pressure, causing glaucoma.
- Port Wine stain on the face can also indicate brain involvement and an MRI should be performed to rule out associated diseases (like Sturge-Weber syndrome).
- Lesions that are know as "geographic" with good skin peeking through parts of the stain, almost always respond well to laser therapy. Lesions that are more convoluted and dense will require more laser treatments.
- Most experts agree that the first 7-8 treatments will achieve the maximum results. After these first initial treatments, the subsequent treatments will generally produce marginal results. Following maximum results, the patient should probably take a break of one year and then try a new laser for further PWS lightening. New lasers are coming out every year that are getting deeper vessels, which are, in turn, getting more clearance.