

Laser treatment of nevus flammeus

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Nevus flammeus (commonly known as "port wine stains") are congenital capillary malformations with an incidence of around 0.4% of the population. They can occur anywhere on the body, but more often on the face and neck, with significant aesthetic damage in this location.

Some angiomas are part of more complex syndromic malformations requiring multidisciplinary medical management.

For over 30 years, laser treatments - and in particular pulsed dye laser, which remains the reference treatment to this day - have enabled these lesions to be more or less completely erased. The aim of these treatments is to destroy the excess capillaries in these angiomas, using a photothermolysis process that respects the surrounding tissue and therefore leaves no scar.

Repeated sessions, spaced a few months apart, and which may be numerous, are necessary to obtain a progressive lightening of the nevus flammeus. This may not be complete, particularly in certain areas such as the center of the face and extremities of the limbs, and if treatment is started late due to the frequent thickening of these angiomas in adulthood. It is very important to start treatment very early, in the first few months of life, to obtain better and faster results.

Pain: this can be a sensitive treatment, requiring the application of an anaesthetic cream one to two hours before the procedure. Additional analgesia with MEOPA gas may be required, and in some cases a short general anaesthetic.

A purpura (superficial hematoma) appears immediately and resolves in 10 to 15 days, accompanied by slight edema for two to four days. A few fine superficial scabs may appear, but these disappear spontaneously.

After-care: a soothing, healing cream is recommended for a few weeks, along with rigorously applied sunscreen for at least a month. In adults, make-up and camouflage allow a decent social life.

Complications: not very frequent

- Hyperpigmentation (brown spots) is more frequent on darker skins and on the lower limbs. They disappear spontaneously, sometimes with the help of topical depigmenting treatments.
- Hypochromia (light spots) can appear on darker skins.
- The risk of scarring is very low, generally due to accidental overdosing.
- Rigorous eye protection is necessary during the session to avoid any ocular risk.

This information sheet recommended by the French Laser Society can be given to you by your dermatologist. Even if it is not sufficient to have an estimate, it helps to give the patient a clear information.

The information consultation provides clear explanations on expected outcomes, side effects and possible complications. There are not any reimbursement from social security or medical leave for these aesthetic treatments. Prices are mainly based on the area to be treated. The total cost is to be evaluated with the patient and is the subject of a signed quote.

A post-operative order and an advice sheet are given to the patient with the doctor's contact information.