

Cherry Angiomas

Q: What are angiomas?

A: Angiomas are benign growths made up of small blood vessels. They can appear anywhere on the body. The three most common types are cherry angiomas, spider angiomas, and angiokeratomas.



Cherry angiomas

Cherry angiomas are red or purplish in color and don't usually grow larger than 1/4-inch in diameter. They can appear alone or in clusters. Spider angiomas are red spots caused by a collection of small blood vessel on the surface of the skin. They often have a red center and thin, reddish lines that spread out like "spider's legs". Angiokeratoma is a benign lesion of capillaries, resulting in small marks of red to blue color and characterized by hyperkeratosis (a thickening of the outer layer of skin).

Q: What causes angiomas?

A: No one knows what causes angiomas, but there may be a genetic factor that makes certain people more likely to get them. They've also been linked to pregnancy, exposure to chemicals, and climate. There also appears to be a link between cherry angiomas and age. They often begin to appear when individuals reach age 30, and seem to increase in size and number with age.

Q: What is the treatment for angiomas?

A: Occasionally angiomas may become irritated (such as from rubbing against clothing) and need to be removed to avoid further problems. However, since most angiomas are harmless, most people have them treated for cosmetic reasons.

There are three ways to have angiomas removed:

- Electrodessication uses an electric needle to destroy the blood vessels in the growth
- Liquid nitrogen is a cold gas applied to the skin to freeze off the growth
- Laser treatment uses a beam of intense, focused light to remove the growth

Q: What are Campbell de Morgan spots?

A: Actually that's another name for cherry angiomas.

Q: Are angiomas very common?

A: Yes, these skin growths that can grow on most areas of your body are quite common particularly on people age 30 and older.

Q: How do I know if I have a cherry angiomas?

A: A cherry angioma is bright red, of a circular or oval shape, and small — ranging in size from a pinpoint to one-fourth of an inch in diameter. Some cherry angiomas appear smooth and even with your skin, while others are slightly raised. They most often grow on the torso, arms and shoulders.

If you notice any changes in the way an angioma looks, schedule an appointment with your dermatologist. It is important to have any type of lesion or growth looked at when its appearance changes so that your doctor can rule out serious conditions, such as skin cancer.