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Facial red vein & vascular birthmark treatments

Broken veins (telangiectasia) of the face and [vascular birthmarks](#) can be unsightly and difficult to conceal.

What treatment is available?

Traditional treatment using diathermy or thermolysis systems have been superceded by less painful, safer and more effective light therapies. These are more expensive however.

Several [lasers](#) are available in New Zealand to treat red skin including pulse dye lasers (PDL), [copper bromide](#), Krypton and KTP lasers and [intense pulsed light \(IPL\) systems](#).

Pulsed dye laser treatment of facial telangiectasia

Before PDL treatment



Day after treatment



2 weeks later



What lesions are suitable for treatment?

The lasers and intense pulsed light machines target red skin, which arise either because of the presence of dilated surface blood vessels or because of an overall increase in blood supply resulting in a flushed appearance. Suitable lesions include:

- Facial telangiectasia (red veins)
- [Rosacea](#)
- [Cherry angiomas](#)
- [Port wine stains](#)
- [Angiokeratoma](#)
- [Angioma serpiginosa](#)
- [Essential telangiectasia](#)
- [Hereditary telangiectasia](#)

Small red spots such as cherry angiomas usually disappear with one treatment. More extensive veins on the face usually require additional treatments spaced a month or so apart.

Blue vessels are generally unsuitable for light or laser treatment, because of their colour, because they have a larger diameter and because they tend to be deeper in the skin. These include venous lake on the lip, large diameter vessels at the side of the nose, and most thread veins on the legs. They may be better dealt with by

[sclerotherapy](#).

What can I expect during treatment?

Generally no anaesthesia is required but there is some discomfort. Some bruising and swelling may occur after IPL or PDL treatment, and small scabs and swelling may arise after copper bromide laser treatment.

Some people take a couple of days off work but most people don't think the unsightliness is too bad. It is quite safe to apply makeup to disguise the bruising or scabbing, if any occurs. Any down-time is generally worth it since the results are mostly excellent.

Related information

References:

On DermNet NZ:

- [Vascular skin lesions](#)
- [Intense pulsed light treatment](#)
- [Copper bromide laser](#)

Other websites:

Books about skin diseases:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

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DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.

If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

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