





cutis marmorata

Cutis marmorata ("marbled skin") refers to mottled skin, typically in newborns in the first few months of life. This phenomenon is caused by instability or immaturity of the nerve supply to the superficial capillary blood vessels in the skin. This causes the blood vessels in some regions of the skin to dilate, producing a red color of the skin, while other regions are contracting, producing pale skin. Hence the "marbled" appearance of the skin. This is most pronounced when the skin is cooled. This condition is also a common finding in babies with Down syndrome, trisomy 21.

There is a more pronounced form of this disorder known as cutis marmorata telangiectatica congenita (congenital generalized phlebectasia), which is rare. In this disorder, the marbling is somewhat more pronounced and permanent, although it too is exacerbated by crying or environmental temperature change. It is usually outgrown in adolescence.

