



Bruises

Bruises are broken blood vessels under the skin. In areas where the skin is thin, like around the eyes, the bruise will show up more. Bruises on the head or shin tend to swell the most because the bones in these areas are very close to the skin.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Black and blue or red skin. As it heals, the skin turns greenish-yellow.
- Pain or tenderness
- Possible swelling
- A bruise usually lasts less than 2 weeks.

CAUSES, RISK FACTORS & CARE

Bruises are common. Most often, they occur after a fall or being hit by some force. They can, though, occur for no apparent reason. The risk of getting bruises increases with:

- Taking certain medications, such as aspirin, blood thinners, corticosteroids, water pills, and drugs for arthritis
- Being female, middle aged, or elderly
- Being an alcoholic or drug user
- Having certain medical conditions. Examples are anemia, a blood platelet disorder, liver disease, and lupus.
- Having a vitamin C or vitamin K deficiency

Most small bruises need no treatment and will go away on their own. For some larger bruises, especially if there is pain or swelling, self-care can help. If bruises result from a medical condition, the medical condition needs to be treated.



SELF-CARE

- Apply a cold pack to the bruised area within 15 minutes of the injury. Keep the cold pack on for 10 minutes at a time. Apply pressure to the cold pack. Take it off for 30 to 60 minutes. Repeat several times for 2 days.
- Rest the bruised area.
- Raise the bruised area above the level of the heart, if practical.
- Two days after the injury, use warm compresses. Do this for 20 minutes at a time.
- Do not bandage a bruise.



CONTACT DOCTOR WHEN

- You have any of these problems with a bruise:
 - Vision problems with a bruise near the eye
 - Signs of infection (fever, increased pain, redness, and/or swelling; pus)
 - Nosebleeds or excessive bleeding from cuts
 - Loss of weight and appetite
 - Joint pain, fever, or swollen lymph nodes
- You have any of these problems:
 - Bruising on the hip after a fall
 - Bruises appear often and easily.
 - Bruises take longer than 2 weeks to go away.
 - Recurring bruise in the same location