

Bruising (Hematoma)

What Is Bruising?

Bleeding into the skin from damaged blood vessels causes bruising. This is also called a bruise. Bruises cause a "black and blue mark" when they first occur. After a few days to weeks, depending on how severe the bruising is, the damaged area will turn more yellowish in color. This is as the body reabsorbs the blood under the skin.

Everyone gets bruises. However, if you have low platelet or other [bleeding problems](#), you may develop blood disorder bruising or hematomas more easily and they may be more severe.

What Is A Hematoma?

A hematoma is a larger collection of blood, usually caused by surgery, injury, or a greater trauma. Hematomas will usually reabsorb into the body, like a bruise. However, depending on the size, location and cause of the hematoma, the area may need to be drained surgically, or take a longer period of time to resolve.

You May Get A Blood Disorder, Bruising or Hematoma If:

- You have had trauma or injury to a certain area from a sports accident or from falling down.
- You may have been struck by a blunt object.
- You may have hit your leg or arm on a chair or a table, which caused bleeding under the skin.
- People who bruise easily may have blood clotting problems and have a tendency to bleed easily as well. If you notice that you are bruising or bleeding easily, notify your health care provider of potential [bleeding problems](#).

Symptoms:

- You may have tiny red dots on your skin, called petechiae (pe- TEEK- ee- ay). These are commonly found on your lower legs. This is a sign of [low blood platelets](#).
- You may have frequent [nosebleeds](#) (epistaxis).
- You may bleed easily, which may be a sign of a blood disorder, or [low blood platelets](#).

- You may be overly tired, or very weak ([fatigue](#)), if you have [anemia](#) due to your [bleeding problems](#), or another underlying disorder. It may be hard for you to do any kind of your normal activities.
- For many individuals, frequent, unexplained bruising or [nosebleeds](#) are the first sign of a bleeding disorder.

Things You Can Do About Bruising or Hematoma:

- If you develop bruising: apply ice to the area for about 20 to 30 minutes. This will help to constrict, or shrink the blood vessels that may be damaged and bleeding.
- After the first 48 hours, you may use heated compresses (which may be a heating pad, or a very warm wash cloth), 2 or 3 times a day, to help reabsorb the blood.
- If you have pain at the site, you may take Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) up to 4000 mg per day (two extra-strength tablets every 6 hours). If you have a bleeding disorder, you should avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drugs, as well as aspirin, because these drugs may interfere with blood platelets, or prolong your bleeding.
- If you notice that you are bruising or bleeding easily, notify your health care provider of potential [bleeding problems](#).
- Make sure you tell your doctor, as well as all health care providers, about any other medications you are taking (including over-the-counter, vitamins, or herbal remedies). Do not take aspirin or products containing aspirin unless your health care provider permits this.
- Remind your doctor or health care provider if you have a history of diabetes, liver, kidney, or heart disease.

Medications or Recommendations for Treatment of Bruising:

- Treatment of bruising consists of applying *ice packs*, and an analgesic such as Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for comfort. If you have an underlying bleeding disorder causing blood disorder bruising, or problems with your blood clotting factors, your healthcare provider may treat your disorder with additional medications.
- *Analgesic* (pain medication)- If you have pain at the site where you were bleeding, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) up to 4000 mg per day (two extra-strength tablets every 6 hours). It is important not to exceed the recommended daily dose of Tylenol®, as it may cause liver damage. As with all medications, you should discuss this with your healthcare provider before taking any medications.
- If you have a bleeding disorder, you should avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drugs, as well as aspirin, because these drugs may interfere with blood platelets, accentuate [bleeding problems](#).

When to Contact Your Doctor or Health Care Provider:

- Bleeding that does not stop after a few minutes, or new, unexplained bruising.

Other Common Bleeding Problems:

Bruising (Hematoma) | [Injury](#) | [Nosebleeds \(Epistaxis\)](#) | [Rectal Bleeding](#) | [Vaginal Bleeding](#)

Note: We strongly encourage you to talk with your health care professional about your specific medical condition and treatments. The information contained in this website about bleeding problems and other medical conditions is meant to be helpful and educational, but is not a substitute for medical advice.