

# Bruise

## What is it?

A bruise forms when blood vessels under the skin break. The trapped blood creates a bruise that's black, purple or blue then changes color as it heals.

## Plan of Action:

- Elevate the bruised area above heart level, if possible.
- Apply an ice pack wrapped in a thin towel. Leave it in place for 20 minutes. Repeat several times for a day or two after the injury. This helps to reduce the swelling and pain.
- If the bruised area is swelling, put an elastic bandage around it, but not too tight

If the skin isn't broken, you don't need to bandage a bruise. Consider taking a nonprescription pain reliever if needed.

## Consult your health care provider if you:

- Have very painful swelling in the bruised area
- Suspect a bruise has been caused by child abuse, domestic violence or elder abuse
- Are still experiencing pain three days after a seemingly minor injury
- Have frequent, large or painful bruises
- Have bruises that begin suddenly or seem to develop for no reason
- Have a personal or family history of easy bruising or bleeding

- Notice a lump form over the bruise, which may be a sign of pooling blood, also called a hematoma
- Have unusual bleeding, such as from the nose or gums

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