Bruises Treatment

Self-Care at Home

The treatment for a bruise is most effective right after the injury while the bruise is still reddish.

- A cold compress such as an icepack or a bag of frozen peas should be applied to the affected area for 20-30 minutes in order to speed healing and reduce swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the skin. Wrap the icepack in a towel.

- If the bruise takes up a large area of the leg or foot, the leg should be kept elevated as much as possible during the first 24 hours after the injury.

- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be taken for pain as instructed on the bottle. Avoid aspirin because aspirin slows the blood from clotting and may, in fact, prolong the bleeding.

- After about 48 hours, heat in the form of a warm washcloth applied to the bruise for 10 minutes or so 2 or 3 times a day may increase blood flow to the bruised area allowing the skin to reabsorb the blood more quickly. Ultimately, the bruise will fade in color.

Medical Treatment

Doctors have no special treatment for bruises other than the techniques described under Home Care: icepacks and later heat, over-the-counter medications for pain, and elevation of the bruised area, if possible.

- A suspected victim of domestic abuse may be referred to a social worker.
For more information, read the complete article, Bruises on http://www.emedicinehealth.com.

WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth
Reviewed by Ann Edmundson, MD on May 24, 2006
Last updated: May 24, 2006

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor.
© 2006 WebMD Inc. All rights reserved.