

Ecchymosis: Causes, symptoms, and treatment of skin bruising.

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Introduction

Ecchymosis is a medical term used to describe the discoloration of the skin or mucous membranes due to bleeding underneath the skin. It is commonly known as a bruise. When small blood vessels, called capillaries, rupture or break, blood leaks into the surrounding tissues, resulting in the characteristic purple, blue, or black discoloration. Ecchymosis, commonly known as a bruise, is a discoloration of the skin caused by bleeding under the skin. It occurs when small blood vessels called capillaries break or rupture, allowing blood to leak into the surrounding tissues [1].

Discoloration: The primary symptom of ecchymosis is the appearance of a blue, black, or purple mark on the skin. The colour of the bruise typically changes over time, progressing from red or purplish-blue to green or yellow as it heals.

Pain or tenderness: Bruises can be sensitive to touch or pressure. You may experience pain or tenderness in the affected area, especially immediately after the injury or in the early stages of the bruising. **Swelling:** Bruises often cause localized swelling due to the accumulation of blood beneath the skin. The swelling can make the affected area appear puffy or raised. **Gradual fading:** As the bruise heals, it typically goes through different colour changes. The discoloration may gradually fade and change from greenish-yellow to a yellowish-brown before finally disappearing. **Size and shape:** Bruises can vary in size and shape depending on the severity of the injury. They can range from small, round marks to larger, irregularly shaped patches. **Sensitivity to movement:** If the bruise is located near a joint or muscle, you may experience discomfort or pain when moving the affected area [2].

Ecchymosis typically occurs as a result of trauma or injury, such as a blow, impact, or excessive pressure on the skin. The force causes blood vessels to rupture, leading to bleeding and subsequent bruising. Certain medical conditions, such as bleeding disorders, blood clotting disorders, or certain medications that affect blood clotting, can also increase the likelihood of ecchymosis.

Ecchymotic patches appear as flat, irregularly shaped areas of discoloration on the skin. Initially, the colour may be reddish or purplish, and as the bruise heals, it may turn blue, green, yellow, or brown. The size and intensity of the discoloration

can vary depending on the severity of the injury. In addition to the visible discoloration, ecchymosis may be accompanied by localized pain, tenderness, swelling, and stiffness in the affected area. These symptoms usually subside as the bruise heals [3].

Ecchymosis typically follows a predictable healing process. Initially, the body initiates an inflammatory response to clear away damaged tissue and begin the healing process. Over time, the body reabsorbs the leaked blood, and the bruise gradually fades away. The duration of the healing process can vary depending on the size and severity of the bruise, ranging from a few days to several weeks. Most cases of ecchymosis do not require specific medical treatment and can be managed at home. Applying ice packs or cold compresses to the affected area immediately after the injury can help reduce swelling and pain. Elevating the injured limb and applying gentle pressure can also be beneficial. Over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen may help alleviate discomfort. However, it is advisable to consult a healthcare professional if the bruise is accompanied by severe pain, swelling, or if there is concern about an underlying medical condition [4].

It's important to note that while ecchymosis is typically harmless and resolves on its own, frequent or unexplained bruising without apparent cause may warrant further evaluation by a healthcare provider to rule out any underlying medical conditions [5].

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