



**AUSTIN
EMERGENCY
CENTER**

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BRUISES-

- **What are bruises?** — Bruises happen when blood vessels under the skin break, but the skin isn't cut. Blood leaks into the tissues under the skin. Bruises start off red in color, and then turn blue or purple. As they heal, bruises can turn green and yellow. Most bruises heal in 1 to 2 weeks, but some take longer.
- **How are bruises treated?** — A bruise will get better on its own. But to feel better and help your bruise heal, you can:
 - Put a cold gel pack, bag of ice, or bag of frozen vegetables on the injured area every 1 to 2 hours, for 15 minutes each time. Put a thin towel between the ice (or other cold object) and your skin. Use the ice (or other cold object) for at least 6 hours after your injury. Some people find it helpful to ice longer, even up to 2 days after their injury.
 - Raise the area, if possible – Raising the area above the level of your heart helps to reduce swelling.
 - Take medicine to reduce the pain and swelling – To treat pain, you can take Tylenol. To treat pain and swelling, you can take [ibuprofen](#) (sample brand names: Advil, Motrin). But people who have certain conditions or take certain medicines should not take ibuprofen. If you are unsure, ask your doctor or nurse if you can take ibuprofen.
- **You should NOT:**
 - Put a warm pack or heating pad on your bruise
 - Stick a needle or other object in your bruise to drain it
- **When should I call or see the doctor?**
 - You get a fever, your joints swell, you cannot walk or move, or you get bruises for no reason.

WOUNDS-

- **What is a wound?** - A wound is a disruption of the normal structure and function of the skin and skin architecture
 - An **Abrasion** is a superficial wound that does not need repair by a physician.
 - **Lacerations** generally need to be treated by a physician and are deeper than abrasions
- **How are abrasions treated?**
 - Irrigation is important for decreasing bacterial load and removing loose material. Tap water is excellent by itself to irrigate wounds.
 - For much of the history of medicine, it was believed that wounds should not be occluded but left exposed to the air. However moist wounds heal more rapidly compared with wounds that dried out up to 40% faster.
 - Wounds should be covered with Neosporin and sterile gauze. Clean wounds daily with warm soapy water.
- **You should NOT:**
 - Use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol to clean a wound. These solutions can damage healthy tissue.
- **When should I see the doctor?** —
 - You have a deep wound or laceration, you have a very dirty or soiled wound, your wound continues to bleed, you have glass, gravel or a foreign body in the wound, or you have a fever or other signs of infection.