

ATTACHMENT A: CARE OF BRUISES

A bruise may appear after a blood test at the venipuncture site. A bruise occurs when small blood vessels under the skin break or tear. Blood seeps into the surrounding tissues under the skin, causing the black and blue color of a bruise. Older adults and people who take aspirin or blood thinners may bruise more easily than others.

HOME TREATMENT

For the Bruise:

- Apply ice or cold packs for 15-20 minutes, 3 or more times per day. Ice helps relieve pain and reduces swelling and inflammation. Keep a thin cloth (damp or dry) between your skin and the cold pack. Do NOT fall asleep with ice on your skin.
- If possible, elevate the bruised area higher than your heart.
- Avoid things that might increase swelling, such as hot showers, heat rubs (for example, BenGay[®]), hot tubs, hot packs, and drinking alcohol.
- Avoid aspirin for the first 24 hours. It may prolong the clotting time of blood and cause more severe bruising from bleeding under the skin.

For Pain:

- Try a nonprescription medicine such as acetaminophen (for example, Tylenol[®]) or ibuprofen or naproxen (for example, Advil[®] or Aleve[®]).
- After the first 24 hours, you can use aspirin.
- For all the above medicines:
 - Use, but do not exceed, the maximum recommended dose to help reduce your pain.
 - If you have been told to avoid anti-inflammatory medications (such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen), call your doctor before taking them.
 - If you are prone to unexplained bruises or have a known bleeding disorder or you take blood-thinning medication, call your health professional before taking any nonprescription medicine.
 - Do not take aspirin if you are under the age of 20; call your health professional.

AFTER THE FIRST 48 HOURS

If the area is still painful after 48 hours, apply a warm washcloth to your bruise for 10 minutes, 3 times a day. This will help blood flow to the area and speed healing. Keep a thin, dry cloth between your skin and the warm washcloth.

WHEN TO CALL A DOCTOR

- The pain is severe.
- You can't use or move the bruised body part.
- You have signs of infection. These may include:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth or redness
 - Red streaks leading from the bruise
 - Discharge of pus
 - Fever of 100°F or higher with no other cause
- Bruise lasts longer than 4 weeks.

If you require medical assistance, please call the Kaiser Permanente Appointment Call Center at 1-888-988-2800 (toll free). Reference: Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook 1995-2001. Healthwise, Incorporated, P.O. Box 1989, Boise, ID 83701