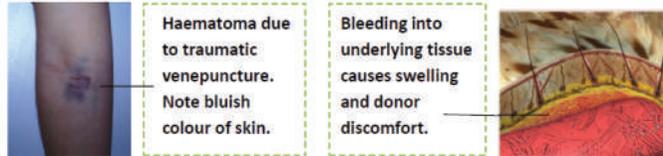


Bruising

- Advice for Donors

WHAT IS BRUISING?

Bruising is bleeding which occurs underneath the skin. For example, a hard knock, which does not break the skin, can damage blood vessels, which lie directly underneath. These damaged vessels can leak a small amount of blood, which collects in the area as a bruise. Over a period of some days or even weeks, blue-black discoloration appears then changes to yellow but eventually fades and disappears. It may be 3 to 4 weeks before bruising completely disappears, although any discomfort should have resolved before this.



WHY CAN BRUISING HAPPEN AFTER BLOOD DONATION?

There are tiny fragile blood vessels running just under the skin, as well as the larger veins, which can often be seen, from which the blood donation is obtained. When the needle is inserted into the arm, one of the small vessels may be punctured and then bleeding occurs. It is impossible to predict this, as such blood vessels are not usually visible. This is more likely to happen when the veins in the arm do not stand out well. Veins in general are relatively small and fragile, which can result in the blood collection needle accidentally perforating the back wall of the vein during blood donation.

Another reason is that, when the needle is taken out of the vein, a little bleeding may continue until the small hole in the vein closes up.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Of course, prevention is the best cure, which is why we always ask donors to put pressure on their arm after the needle is removed. It is essential that adequate pressure is maintained to ensure that any bleeding has stopped.

Our staff will very carefully inspect the needle site to ensure that this has happened. Secondly, if a bruise is seen to develop during donation, it is extremely likely that we will discontinue the donation.

You should not be disappointed if this is the case, as this action will certainly prevent bruising from becoming worse and therefore is in your best interest.

If a bruise is obvious, then one of our staff will ensure that a dressing is applied to encourage the bruise to disperse in as painless a way as possible. You will be advised by our staff how long to keep the dressing in place.

Bruising can be painful and you should certainly avoid any heavy lifting or exercising with the arm, which may aggravate the pain. Even movements, such as turning the steering wheel of a car, can aggravate bruising. However normal and gentle movements are very beneficial.

Cold compresses such as an ice pack can be useful but please do not apply heat, e.g. hot water bottle, as this can worsen the bruising quite considerably.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you do require pain relief then it is possible to take Paracetamol as directed on the bottle. Please avoid Aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as Ibuprofen, as this can also make bruising worse.

Bruising can look very dramatic, but is usually harmless. We do ask you if you experience any of the following, to seek further help :

- Severe pain
- Numbness or pins and needles in the arm, hand or fingers
- Increase in size of the bruise after 24 hours
- Change in colour or swelling of the hand or fingers

If any of these do occur, please contact our doctors on 8791 4335 (office hour) or call 2875 2521 (24 hrs recording machine) and leave your name, donor number, donation date and contact number.



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