

Preventing Bruises

What exactly is a bruise?

A bruise, often called a contusion, is a bleed outside a blood vessel but underneath your skin.¹ It is often the result of bumping into something or a fall, but bruises may appear without any trauma or injury at all. This may be a sign of too much warfarin and should be reported to your doctor, no matter how minor it appears.²

Keeping warfarin in your target range will reduce your risk of prolonged bleeding from an injury or reduce your risk of developing bruises. As always, discuss bruises with your doctor.

The phases of bruising

As the body begins to repair the damaged area, a bruise will undergo color changes, including purplish black, reddish blue, or yellowish green before returning to normal.³

Bruising first aid

You can enhance bruise healing by elevating the injured area and placing ice on the bruise for 10-15 minutes at a time. Place the ice in a cloth, DO NOT place ice directly on the skin and be careful not to freeze the skin.¹

Try to rest the bruised body part by not overworking your muscles in that area. Pain is not an indication of the bruise severity; discuss all over-the-counter pain relievers with your doctor before taking any medication as it may interact with warfarin.

Common causes of bruising

A bruise to your thighs may occur against the corners of desks or tables. Corner table bruises are often deep tissue, serious injuries. Beds with metal frames can cause painful shin injuries.

Falls frequently result in bruising. Report any falls you take to your doctor. Warfarin may also cause bruising including small black and blue marks for no apparent reason.²

Tips to reduce your risk of bruising

Placing your hand on the corners of tables and desks will help you avoid a bruise. Finding a bed's frame before approaching it may prevent an injury. Keeping your INR (International Normalized Ratio) in your target range will reduce your risk of prolonged bleeding from an injury or reduce your risk of developing small bruises.

Contact your doctor after any injury

For more information on improving your safety, visit www.PTINR.com or call **1-877-262-4669**



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1. Muscle contusion (bruise). American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00341>. Accessed Feb, 2012.
2. Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. Medication Guide for Coumadin Tablets and Coumadin for Injection [Package Insert]. Princeton, NJ: Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, (2009).
3. Ballas M, Kraut EH. Bleeding and bruising: a diagnostic work-up. *Am Fam Physician*. 2008 Apr 15;77(8):1117-24.