

## The Known Fact About Cuts Bruises And Blisters

To begin with, a cut refers to a skin wound with separation of the connective tissue elements. Unlike an abrasion (a wound caused by friction or scraping), none of the skin is missing the skin is just separated. A cut is typically thought of as a wound caused by a sharp object (such as a knife or a shard of glass). The term laceration implies a torn or jagged wound. Lacerations tend to be caused by blunt trauma (such as a blow, fall, or collision). Cuts and lacerations are terms for the same condition. The term gash can be used for more dramatic effect because it implies a longer or deeper cut. An avulsion refers to a wound where tissue is not just separated but torn away from the body. After you suffer a cut you often bleed. Other concerns with a cut include infection, pain, damage to structures beneath the skin, and future scars. Call your doctor to decide whether you need a tetanus booster. You should have had a tetanus booster immunization within the last 10 years if you have a simple, clean cut, or within the last five years if you have a more complex or dirty cut. Beyond general wound care advice, it is very difficult to give advice on care specific to a patient's cut over the phone. Your doctor may help you decide whether it is better to go to the doctor's office or to a hospital's Emergency Department. Just as at home, the first step is to stop the bleeding. If direct pressure is not enough, a blood pressure cuff can help as a temporary measure for cuts on arms and legs. Tourniquets are generally not helpful for cuts to the face or body. Importantly, cleaning is the most important aspect of good wound care. This may be done by first washing the adjacent skin with soap and water and removing crusted blood with diluted hydrogen peroxide. Next, irrigation by squirting saline at the wound under high pressure is very effective at reducing bacterial contamination in the wound. Secondly, a bruise is a common skin injury that results in a discoloration of the skin. Blood from damaged blood vessels deep beneath the skin collects near the surface of the skin resulting in what we think of as a black and blue mark. The treatment for a bruise is most effective right after the injury while the bruise is still reddish. A cold compress such as an icepack or a bag of frozen peas should be applied to the affected area for 20-30 minutes in order to speed healing and reduce swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the skin. Wrap the icepack in a towel. If the bruise takes up a large area of your leg or foot, the leg should be kept elevated as much as possible during the first 24 hours after the injury. Additionally, Acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be taken for pain as instructed on the bottle. Avoid aspirin because aspirin slows the blood from clotting and may, in fact, prolong the bleeding. After about 48 hours, heat in the form of a warm washcloth applied to the bruise for 10 minutes or so 2 or 3 times a day may increase blood flow to the bruised area allowing the skin to reabsorb the blood more quickly. Ultimately, the bruise will fade in color. Moreover, a black eye is a relatively common result of injury to the face or the head, caused when blood and other fluids collect in the space around the eye; swelling and dark discoloration result hence, the name black eye. Most black eyes are relatively minor injuries. Many heal on their own in a few days; however, sometimes they signify a more serious injury. The skin around the eye is very loose, with mostly fat underneath. This makes it an ideal site for fluid to accumulate. The effects of gravity also help to swell this part of the face. This is why many people wake up with puffy eyes in the morning. Despite the name, black eye, the eye itself is not usually injured. The tissues around the eye may be significantly discolored and swollen without any injury to the eye itself. Think of it as a bruise around the eye. Like a bruise, as a black eye heals, the swelling around the eye decreases, and the bruise gradually fades away. Rest and ice applied early after the injury help to decrease swelling and pain. Ice helps to decrease swelling by constricting blood vessels, by decreasing fluid accumulation, and by cooling and numbing the area. We suggest you apply ice for 20 minutes an hour every hour while awake, for the first 24 hours. Ice should not be applied directly to the injury. To avoid potential cold injury to the site, wrap the ice in a cloth or use a commercial ice pack. A bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth makes a good ice pack. Also, do not put a steak or a piece of raw meat on a black eye. No scientific evidence supports this treatment. Putting potentially bacteria laden meat on a mucous membrane or an open skin injury can be dangerous. Next, splinters are foreign bodies that are partially or fully embedded in the skin. Splinters usually are wood, but metal, glass, and even plastic materials may be considered a splinter. Sometimes splinters have to be removed by medical professionals, especially splinters that are deeply embedded or lodged under a fingernail or toenail. Most people with splinters, however, are able to remove them at home. Splinters are usually found when they penetrate the skin usually in the hand or foot. Almost always, even fully embedded foreign bodies have a unique sensation. Also, splinters are full of germs. If splinters are not removed (or don't work their way out themselves), they may cause an infection or an allergic response. Using a pair of tweezers, grab the protruding end of the splinter and pull it out along the direction it entered. Wash the area with soap and water. At times, splinters may be fully embedded in the skin. Use a small needle cleaned in alcohol. Also, clean the skin with an antiseptic (examples are Betadine or alcohol). Use the needle to gently and partially dislodge the splinter, which may then be removed fully with tweezers. Wash the area with soap and water. Soak the area in warm water with a tablespoon of baking soda added. Do this twice a day. The splinter may work its way out after a few days. If a splinter appears to be too deep to attempt removal at home, see your doctor. If you have only been able to remove a portion of the splinter and foreign material remains embedded in the skin, the doctor should be able to remove the rest.

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