

Typically, bruises are characterised by a discolouration of the skin, swelling and soreness.

### **What to look for**

- Swelling around the affected area
- Skin discolouration - purple, blue, red, pink fading to yellow
- Very tender at affected area.

### **Causes**

Bruises are caused when blood vessels rupture. This can be the result of sudden strong pressure being applied to the affected area such as during an injury. Also weakened blood vessels or abnormal blood cells can cause bruising. In addition, people who are drastic weight loss diets also tend to bruise easily. If you tend to bruise continually or frequently, it may be a sign of a more serious blood condition and a consultation should be considered with your doctor.

### **Traditional Treatment**

When a bruise first occurs, you should apply a cold compress (ice cubes wrapped in a tea towel) directly to it. Keep the ice there for approximately 5 minutes. If you have not ice, a pack of frozen food or vegetables will do. While applying the ice, keep the affected part of the body raised if possible. After this, apply a bandage to try and stop it from swelling up. If possible put a pad of lint or cotton wool on first.

### **Alternative/Natural Treatments**

After the injury has started to improve, a warm compress should be applied to speed up the healing process. (This is not to be applied when the injury is new). Also consider taking some vitamin C. Vitamin C is used by the body to produce collagen. Herbalists and homoeopaths also use Arnica for bruising with much success. See your Naturopath for an appropriate dosage as Arnica is a particularly poisonous herb and must be handled with great care. It is only safe when prepared by a professional and produced as a specially prepared tincture, applied externally onto the injury and only where the skin is not broken. Remember - repeated applications of Arnica can result in more inflammation and it should never be taken internally.

### **When to seek further professional advice**

- If your bruise is not healing as it should
- If you get repeated bruising rather easily or for no apparent reason - see your doctor immediately.