



# Kids

## Calling the Shots

**Q:** What causes a bruise?  
4th Grade, Eastway Elementary

**Answer:** A ball hits you in the leg or you fall down. Ouch! But what causes those funny colored marks on your body?

Your body is equipped with thousands of tiny tubes called blood vessels. These blood vessels carry blood, oxygen and nutrients (that's food) to fuel your muscles, bones, skin and other parts of you body. When you fall or bump into something hard, these blood vessels can break, leaking blood out under the skin. This causes the reddish-purple color that we call a bruise. Special cells called platelets come and plug up the holes or cracks in the blood vessels to stop the bleeding. Over a few days to up to two weeks, the blood under the skin is reabsorbed and recycled. That's why bruises start out blue or black or purple, then fade to green, yellow and finally brown as they heal. Bruises heal more slowly as you move down the body. Bruises on the arm heal more quickly than those on the legs.

How can you get a bruise to heal faster? First, if you hurt yourself apply ice over the area for about 10 minutes. Second, have an adult help you wrap the area with an elastic wrap to apply mild pressure the area. Then after 24 hours, you can apply heat with a hot water bottle or heating pad to help the blood get recycled faster. Make sure you check that it is not too hot and only leave this on for 10-15 minutes. You can prevent bruises by eating food high in vitamin K, found in green leafy vegetables like salad, spinach, chick-peas or hummus, and other bright green veggies. Vitamin C is also good for preventing bruises and found in citrus fruits like oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes and their juices. Always wear a helmet or protective pads to prevent bruises and cuts altogether!

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### Activity:

Look in today's **Healthy Living** section of **The Herald-Sun** and read the article titled "Experts Urge Moderation When Eating Fair Treats". What does Tracey Bates, Nutritionist with the Durham County Health Department, recommend you do or eat at the North Carolina State Fair to assure that you are eating healthy foods?



**Durham Regional Hospital**  
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**ATTENTION STUDENTS!**

Submit your questions! Call Bonnie McKnight 419-6539

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