

9 Reasons Why You Bruise Easily

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✓ Fact Checked

January 04, 2023

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Your skin bruises more easily as you get older; straining during exercise, certain medications and underlying medical conditions may also make you bruise easily
- › A deficiency in bioflavonoids and vitamin C may contribute to easy bruising
- › If you bruise easily, eat more vegetables and fruits and consider a rutin bioflavonoid supplement
- › Your diet is your No. 1 tool for healthy skin; omega-3 fats, astaxanthin and polyphenol-rich foods are essential for your skin

Any type of traumatic injury, such as a fall, can cause capillaries, or small blood vessels, near your skin's surface to break and leak red blood cells. This causes the reddish-purple or "black and blue" appearance of bruises on your skin. Technically known as contusions, bruises may result from virtually any injury to blood vessels in your skin.

As your body begins to heal and metabolizes the blood cells, the bruise will typically fade to a green, yellow or brown color before disappearing entirely. It's virtually inevitable that you'll get a bruise once in a while, but if you have bruises appearing often and can't figure out why, there could be an underlying reason. You may have simply bumped your arm or leg and forgotten, or it could be something else entirely.

9 Reasons You May Bruise Easily

There are many reasons why you may be prone to bruising. Old age, genetics, pale skin, increased strain during exercise and sun damage are among the most common. Diseases such as diabetes, purpuric dermatosis or blood disorders like leukemia may make you prone to easy bruising too.

- 1. Your age** – As you get older, your skin loses some of the protective fatty layer that provides cushioning against bumps and falls. Your skin also becomes thinner while the production of collagen slows. This means that it generally takes much less force to cause a bruise than it did when you were younger.
- 2. Purpuric dermatosis** – This vascular condition, which is more common in the elderly, causes thousands of tiny bruises, often on your shins, which may have the appearance of cayenne pepper from afar.¹ The bruises are the result of blood leaking out of small capillaries.
- 3. Blood disorders** – Blood disorders such as hemophilia and leukemia can cause unexplained bruising, often because your blood fails to clot properly. If you have severe and frequent unexplained bruising, it's a good idea to see a physician to rule out such disorders, especially if it seemed to come on suddenly.
- 4. Diabetes** – People with diabetes may develop dark skin discolorations, often in areas where skin touches other skin frequently. These discolorations may be mistaken for bruises, but they are actually due to underlying insulin resistance.
- 5. Excessive straining during exercise** – Putting your muscles under excessive strain, such as may occur during heavy weight lifting, can cause blood vessels to burst and lead to bruising. Microscopic tears in your muscle fiber caused by exercise can also cause bruises. In addition, if you engage in sports or vigorous exercise, you may be exposed to bumps and small traumas that cause bruises but not remember the actual impacts.
- 6. Certain medications** – Medications such as aspirin, anticoagulant medications, and antiplatelet agents reduce your blood's clotting ability² and make bruising more likely. Medications including aspirin, prednisone,³ prednisolone, oral contraceptives

and others may also weaken your blood vessels, which increases the likelihood of bruises.

7. **Family history** – If you have close family members who tend to bruise easily, there's a chance you will too.
8. **Pale skin** – Pale skin doesn't make you more prone to bruising, but it does make any bruises you get more visible than they would be on someone with darker skin.
9. **Sun damage** – While your body needs regular sun exposure to produce vitamin D and get a host of additional benefits, excessive sun exposure – the type that leads to burning – can cause your skin to lose its pliability and resilience. This, in turn, makes bruising easier and more noticeable.

Your Diet May Be the Most Important Factor in Bruising

The reason why most people bruise is that their capillaries are too fragile and essentially are easily torn. One of the best ways to ensure that your capillaries remain strong and flexible is to have a steady source of bioflavonoids in your diet. Excellent dietary sources of bioflavonoids include dark-colored berries, dark leafy greens, garlic and onions.

Typically, a well-rounded diet with plenty of organic vegetables and some fruits will be more than sufficient to provide all the micronutrients you need to prevent bruising from all but the most severe traumas. However, if you bruise easily, the following nutrients will be especially important. If you're not getting enough of them via your diet a supplement may be useful.

- **Rutin** – Rutin is a bioflavonoid known to strengthen blood vessels. For this reason, it's often used for varicose veins and hemorrhoids, as well as bruising. In fact, a deficiency of bioflavonoids may allow blood vessels to break easier, which is why, if you bruise easily, you would likely benefit from taking rutin.

In one study of people with progressive pigmented purpura, the skin lesions were completely cleared after four weeks of treatment with a rutin (50 milligrams (mg) twice a day) and vitamin C supplement.⁴

- **Hesperidin** – This bioflavonoid, found in citrus peels, is also known for strengthening capillaries. In a study of menopausal women, those who took a daily supplement of hesperidin and vitamin C had reduced bruising.⁵
- **Vitamin C** – In people with low vitamin C intake, increasing vitamin C has been found to reduce bruising.⁶ Taking vitamin C along with bioflavonoids like rutin or hesperidin is recommended,⁷ as they may improve vitamin C's effectiveness and absorption.

According to the University of Michigan:⁸

"Even minor deficiencies of vitamin C and possibly of flavonoids can lead to increased bruising. People who bruise easily may benefit from eating more fruits and vegetables, common sources of vitamin C and flavonoids ... Reduce your tendency to bruise by taking a daily combination of at least 400 mg of vitamin C and 400 mg of flavonoids, such as hesperidin or rutin."

11 Natural Remedies to Speed Bruise Healing

The key to avoid bruises is to eat fresh vegetables and fruits regularly. However, if you already have a bruise, nature is full of simple, natural solutions that may help it go away faster. These include:

Arnica oil – Arnica flowers and roots have been used for hundreds of years as an herbal medicine. It has anti-inflammatory properties and also stimulates the flow of white blood cells, which process congested blood to help disperse trapped fluid from your joints, muscles and bruised tissue.

Arnica oil is recommended for topical application only and in diluted form, as pure arnica essential oil is very potent and may cause severe side effects.

Cabbage leaves – For facial bruises, take the large outer leaves of white cabbage, break the ridges of the leaves and dip them in very hot water. Then apply to the bruise, but make sure they're not scalding hot as you put them on your face.

Cold compress – Applying a cold compress to the bruised area can help reduce swelling and pain. The sooner you apply the compress after the injury, the better.

Aloe vera – The fresh gel that comes from the aloe vera plant can help speed up healing from wounds and skin irritations.

Calendula – To make a salve, boil one ounce of dried calendula flowers or leaves (or one-fourth teaspoon of fresh juice from the herb) with one ounce of lard. Once the mixture has cooled, apply it to the bruise. This mixture is also good for sprains, pulled muscles, sores and boils.

Fenugreek – To make a poultice, put one-half ounce of crushed fenugreek seeds in a small cloth bag and boil it in water for a few minutes. Remove the bag and apply the "tea water" to the area. Make it as hot as you can stand it (but make sure it's not scalding your skin).

Garden thyme – Put the green plant parts in water and boil them for three to four minutes. Cover the pot and leave it for another two to three minutes. Strain the mixture and add the decoction to your bath water. Soak in it as you would normally.

Onion – Apply it raw, directly to the bruise.

St. John's Wort – Put 10 to 15 drops of St. John's Wort oil in water and apply the mixture to the area.

Apple cider vinegar – Apply a hot or cold poultice of apple cider vinegar to your bruises.

Vitamin K – Topical vitamin K may help to reduce bruising.

Healthy Skin Comes From the Inside

Eating a healthy diet, which focuses on whole, unprocessed foods, is your No. 1 strategy for helping your body detox naturally while supplying the necessary nutrients your skin needs to thrive. In addition to the tips mentioned above to help prevent easy bruising, some foods are particularly effective at [promoting healthy skin](#), including:

- **Animal-based omega-3 fats** — If your skin is rough, dry and wrinkly, you probably need more omega-3, as it helps regulate oil production in your skin, balance hydration, reduce inflammation and minimize the effects of sun damage and aging in general.⁹
- **Polyphenol-rich foods** such as grapes, dark chocolate, cocoa, olives, green tea and certain herbs.
- **Fermented vegetables**, which help promote the growth of beneficial intestinal bacteria and aid in immune balance and digestion.
- **Astaxanthin** — Astaxanthin is a carotenoid antioxidant derived from *Haematococcus microalgae*. The alga produces astaxanthin as a protective mechanism to shield itself from harsh UVs and other environmental stressors.

Research published in the *Journal of Clinical Biochemistry and Nutrition* in 2017 showed 16 weeks of astaxanthin supplementation protected against wrinkles and loss of skin moisture, and improved skin elasticity.¹⁰ A krill oil supplement will give you both astaxanthin and omega-3.

Sources and References

- ¹ [Medscape October 9, 2020](#)
- ² [Mayo Clinic, Easy bruising: Why does it happen?](#)
- ³ [Johns Hopkins Vasculitis Center, Prednisone](#)
- ⁴ [J Am Acad Dermatol. 1999 Aug;41\(2 Pt 1\):207-8](#)
- ⁵ [Del Med J. 1959 Jan;31\(1\):19-22](#)
- ⁶ [Am J Clin Nutr. 1981 May;34\(5\):871-6](#)
- ⁷ [University of Michigan Health System](#)

- ⁸ University of Michigan Health System, Eating Right
- ⁹ Aveeno.com Omega-3 Skin Benefits
- ¹⁰ Clinical Biochemistry and Nutrition July 2017; 61(1): 33-39