Contusion (Bruise) of Foot

Injury to the foot causes bruises (*contusions*)**.** Contusions are caused by bleeding from small blood vessels that allow blood to leak out into the muscles, cord-like structures that attach muscle to bone (*tendons*), and/or other soft tissue.

CAUSES

Contusions of the foot are common. Bruises are frequently seen from:

- Contact sports injuries.
- The use of medications that thin the blood *(anti-coagulants)*.
- Aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents that decrease the clotting ability.
- People with vitamin deficiencies.

SYMPTOMS

Signs of foot injury include pain and swelling. At first there may be discoloration from blood under the skin. This will appear blue to purple in color. As the bruise ages, the color turns yellow. Swelling may limit the movement of the toes.

Complications from foot injury may include:

- Collections of blood leading to disability if calcium deposits form. These can later limit movement in the foot.
- Infection of the foot if there are breaks in the skin.
- Rupture of the tendons that may need surgical repair.

DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosing foot injuries can be made by observation. If problems continue, X-rays may be needed to make sure there are no broken bones (*fractures*). Continuing problems may require physical therapy.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the injury for 10 to 20 minutes, 3 to 4 times per day. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin.
- An elastic wrap (like an Ace bandage) may be used to keep swelling down.
- Keep foot elevated to reduce swelling and discomfort.
- Try to avoid standing or walking while the foot is painful. Do not resume use until instructed by your caregiver. Then begin use gradually. If pain develops, decrease use and continue the above measures. Gradually increase activities that do not cause discomfort until you slowly have normal use.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Use only **if your caregiver has not given medications that would interfere**.
- Begin daily rehabilitation exercises when supportive wrapping is no longer needed.
- Use ice massage for 10 minutes before and after workouts. Fill a large styrofoam cup with water and freeze. Tear a small amount of foam from the top so ice protrudes. Massage ice firmly over the injured area in a circle about the size of a softball.
- Always eat a well balanced diet.
- Follow all instructions for follow up with your caregiver, any orthopedic referrals, physical therapy and rehabilitation. Any delay in obtaining necessary care could result in delayed healing, and temporary or permanent disability.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your pain and swelling increase, or pain is uncontrolled with medications.

- You have loss of feeling in your foot, or your foot turns cold or blue.
- An oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) develops, not controlled by medication.
- Your foot becomes warm to touch, or you have more pain with movement of your toes.
- You have a foot contusion that does not improve in 1 or 2 days.
- Skin is broken and signs of infection occur (drainage, increasing pain, fever, headache, muscle aches, dizziness or a general ill feeling).
- You develop new, unexplained symptoms, or an increase of the symptoms that brought you to your caregiver.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 10/09/2007 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.