Hematoma

A hematoma is a collection of blood which is located any place outside a blood vessel. It is caused by an injury to blood vessels beneath an injured area with a leaking of blood into that area. As blood accumulates it is known as a hematoma. This collection of blood causes a blue to dark blue coloration of the tissue surrounding it. The injury usually improves in days to weeks. If it is close to the skin it often produces a yellowish color of the skin and then disappears completely over a brief period of time. These generally get better without any problems. Hematomas rarely need drainage.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the injured area for 20 minutes four times per day for the first 1 or 2 days, or as directed by your doctor or caregiver.
- Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin. Discontinue the ice if it causes pain.
- If you have a hematoma and a nearby injury to the skin, you may have some bleeding. If the bleeding is more than just a little bit, apply pressure to the area for at least thirty minutes.
- If the injury is on an *extremity* (arm, leg, hand or foot), elevation of that part may help to decrease pain and swelling. Wrapping with an ace or supportive wrap may also be helpful. If the hematoma is on a lower extremity and is painful, crutches may be helpful for a couple days.
- If you have been given a tetanus shot because the skin was broken, your arm may get swollen, red and warm to touch at the shot site. This is a normal response to the medicine in the shot. If you did not receive a tetanus shot today because you did not recall when your last one was given, make sure to check with your caregiver's office and determine if one is needed. Generally for a “dirty” wound, you should receive a tetanus booster if you have not had one in the last five years. If you have a “clean” wound, you should receive a tetanus booster if you have not had one within the last ten years.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Do not use aspirin as it may cause bleeding.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have pain not controlled with medication.
- You develop increasing pain or swelling in the area of injury.
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.
- You develop any problems which seem worse than the problems which brought you in.

MAKE SURE YOU:

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

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