



# Haematoma (Bruising) Information

## Introduction

Although it is hoped that no donor will suffer any ill-effects from donating blood, occasionally bruising of the arm may develop at the venepuncture site, it is called a Haematoma. The haematoma can look dramatic and some people may find this worrying, but it is usually harmless and recovers within a few days.

A haematoma is caused by bleeding under the skin, which occurs due to injury to blood vessels. These injured blood vessels leak a small amount of blood, which collects in the area as a haematoma. If a haematoma occurs during blood donation, the process may be discontinued to prevent it from worsening, with time, the familiar blue-black discolouration changes to green, then yellow and eventually fades and disappears. This may take two to three weeks if the haematoma is large. It is normal for haematomas to spread out before fading.



## **During and after blood donation, the following may happen:**

- The vein is pierced during blood donation, causing some blood to leak into the surrounding tissue. The donor is more likely to develop a bruise if the venepuncture procedure was more difficult than usual.
- There are tiny fragile blood vessels running just under the skin, and on top of the larger veins from which the blood donation is obtained. When the donation needle is inserted into the arm, one of the small vessels may be injured and bleeding occurs.
- Inadequate pressure applied on the venepuncture site after removal of the needle may allow blood to leak in the surrounding tissues
- Lifting heavy objects after blood donation could put pressure on the venepuncture site and dislodge the clot formed.

## **Prevention and management of haematoma following blood donation:**

- Wear clothes with loose fitting sleeves when donating blood. A tight sleeve can act as a tourniquet and cause congestion in the vein, increasing a chance of a haematoma
- Apply firm pressure to the venepuncture site after donation, as advised by the NAMBTS staff member, until the bleeding has stopped. A plaster will be applied to cover the venepuncture site; this should be kept on for a minimum of two hours.
- If a haematoma has developed, apply a cold compression to the area to help relieve the pain or discomfort
- Avoid lifting heavy objects for a few days as this may aggravate the haematoma. However, gentle movements are recommended whilst the haematoma is healing
- If you require more pain relief, it is recommended that you take Paracetamol (panado) as per manufacture's instruction, avoid taking aspirin for the first 24 hours

## **If you experience any of the following, contact NAMBTS (061-386 300/ 325) for advice or visit your doctor:**

- Severe pain
- Numbness or persistent "pins and needles" in the arm, hand or fingers
- Swelling which is large or increasing in size
- Possible inflammation

### **Contact us:**

Head Office & Donation Centre  
35 Tal Street, Windhoek  
t: +264 61 386 300  
f: +264 61 386 301  
e: pro@bts.com.na  
www.bts.com.na

### **Contact us:**

Oshakati Regional Office & Donation Centre  
Oshakati State Hospital Grounds, Oshakati  
t: +264 65 220650  
f: +264 65 226909  
c: +264 811251350

### **Contact us:**

Swakopmund Coastal Regional Office  
& Donation Centre  
4 Ferdinand Stich Street, Swakopmund  
t: +264 64 400 870  
f: +264 64 400 870



**The Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia**  
@NamBTService