

January 2021

Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



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A Message from the Wellbeing Manager

Happy New Year!

This month is a great time to reflect on 2020 and celebrate successes and even acknowledge challenges you may have faced as a family caregiver. It is also an opportunity to plan for how you can embrace a healthy new year with your aging loved one.

The purpose of the family caregiving program is to provide resources, information, and encouragement to family caregivers. In 2021, we will continue to have monthly lunchtime sessions and our caregiver support group to aid you in your role as a caregiver.

If you have suggestions for upcoming lunchtime sessions or if you know of anyone who would like to subscribe to the e-newsletter, please contact me directly at stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu.



Healthy Lifestyle – Healthy Aging

If you are experiencing easy bruising, you might have questions about what is causing the problem and what you can do about it. Find out what role aging plays and when to consult a doctor.

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Yet another unsightly bruise. You don't recall bumping into anything, but lately you seem to be bruising frequently. Is this cause for concern?

Easy bruising is common with age. Although most bruises are harmless and go away without treatment, easy bruising can sometimes be a sign of a more serious problem.

Most bruises form when small blood vessels (capillaries) near the skin's surface are broken by the impact of a blow or injury – often on the arms or legs. When this happens, blood leaks out of the vessels and initially appears as a black-and-blue mark. Eventually your body reabsorbs the blood, and the mark disappears.

Generally, harder blows cause larger bruises. However, if you bruise easily, a minor bump – one you might not even notice – can result in a substantial bruise.

Some people – especially women – are more prone to bruising than others. As you get older, your skin also becomes thinner and loses some of the protective fatty layer that helps cushion your blood vessels from injury.

Aspirin, anticoagulant medications and anti-platelet agents reduce your blood's ability to clot. Antibiotics might also be associated with clotting problems. As a result, bleeding from capillary damage might take longer than usual



to stop – which allows enough blood to leak out to cause a bigger bruise.

Topical and systemic corticosteroids – which can be used to treat various conditions, including allergies, asthma and eczema – cause your skin to thin, making it easier to bruise. Certain dietary supplements, such as ginkgo, also can increase your bruising risk due to a blood-thinning effect.

If you experience increased bruising, don't stop taking your medications. Talk to your doctor about your concerns. Also, make sure your doctor is aware of any supplements you're taking – especially if you're taking them while on a blood-thinning drug. Your doctor might recommend avoiding certain over-the-counter medications or supplements.

Easy bruising sometimes indicates a serious underlying condition, such as a blood-clotting problem or a blood disease. See your doctor if you:

- Have frequent, large bruises, especially if your bruises appear on your trunk, back or face, or seem to develop for no known reasons
- Have easy bruising and a history of significant bleeding, such as during a surgical procedure
- Suddenly begin bruising, especially if you recently started a new medication
- Have a family history of easy bruising or bleeding

These signs and symptoms can indicate:

- Low levels of the blood components that help it clot after injury (platelets)
- Abnormally functioning platelets
- Problems with proteins that help the blood clot

To find the cause of your bruising, your doctor might check your blood platelet levels or do tests that measure the time it takes your blood to clot.

Other serious causes of bruising include domestic violence or abuse. If a loved one has an unexplainable bruise, particularly in an unusual location such as on the face, be aware of the possibility of abuse.

To prevent minor bruising, take steps to avoid falling:

- Use good lighting in your home.
- Avoid clutter and throw rugs, especially on stairs.
- Arrange furniture and electrical cords so that they are not in your way when you walk.
- Find out about the side effects of medications you take. Tell your doctor or pharmacists if a medication makes you dizzy or sleepy.
- Have your vision and hearing tested. Even small changes in sight or hearing can cause you to fall.

Unfortunately, once a bruise has formed, not much can be done to treat it. Most bruises eventually disappear as your body reabsorbs the blood, although healing might take longer as you age. It might help to elevate the affected area and apply ice.

Find the full article: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/easy-bruising/art-20045762?p=1>

Get the Facts:
THE IMPACT OF FALLS ON THE ELDERLY

Over **1/4** of adults over the age of 65 fall in the U.S. each year.

In 2014 alone, older Americans experienced over 29 million falls!

1/5 of falls results in a serious injury, including broken bones and head injuries.

The **#1** cause of injury-related death in people over 65 years old

FALLS

Every	Every	Every
0:00:11	0:00:01	0:19:00
seconds...	second	minutes...
An older adult is treated in the ER for a fall.	an older adult falls.	An older adult dies as the result of a fall.

95%
More than ninety-five percent of all hip fractures are caused by falling

\$67.7 billion - that's the expected direct care cost of falls in 2020.

Falling once doubles your chances of falling again.

Falls can be prevented!
Talk to your doctor about how to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Sources
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Important Facts About Falls. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2m23d4d>
Patient Safety Center of Inquiry (PSCI) Research Patient Falls. In.d.). U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Z5H1Q4>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Falls Are the Leading Cause of Injury and Death in Older Americans. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2cs0WZ5>

performancehealth.com/articles

10 New Year's Goals that Caregivers CAN Achieve

By: Shelley Webb

1. **Learn to take one hour each day for yourself.** Whether it be for reading, taking a bath, journaling, calling a friend or meditating. It is important to find 60 minutes to give your mind a rest.
2. **Resolve not to be right.** If you're talking with your mom on the phone and she insists that Merle Streep starred in a movie in which you know that she didn't, what does it really matter if you let her have the last word?
3. **Learn to accept help.** People want to help and if you continue to decline it, they will stop offering.
4. **Bite your tongue when what you WANT to say is....You JUST asked me that!!** Sometimes moving to a different room or moving the item of conversation helps.
5. **Don't despair if you lose patience...because you will.** Caregiving is tough work. Just do the best you can and remember that you're human.
6. **Attend at least one support group meeting.** Just try ONE. Support groups are educational and encouraging. If you really detest the idea of attending one in the community, try one on-line.
7. **Celebrate the small stuff.** There is a "new" normal now and it's highly unlikely that the old normal is coming back. Maximize the quality of each day for you and your loved one. Maybe take a drive to a pretty area, or reminisce about "the old days", or just sit on the patio.
8. **Find ways to help your loved one stay occupied and connected.** If your loved-one enjoyed attending Sunday services, try to enable them to continue that.
9. **Try journaling or collecting quotations.** Journaling is very therapeutic, but if it's not something you can enjoy, perhaps collecting quotations might interest you.
10. **Last but not least, forget about planning out the entire year.** Caregiving is much too uncertain to be able to make long term goals and it will only frustrate you to do so. The time to be able to do that will come again.



Upcoming Events

FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

The Caregiver Support Group is a monthly group that offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for an aging loved one. The meetings will be held virtually for the foreseeable future from noon to 1 p.m.



January's session will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2021 from noon to 1 p.m. Please RSVP (stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu) for Zoom details by Wednesday, January 13.

LUNCHTIME SESSION

The Lunchtime Session is a monthly educational session to receive valuable information while providing care to your loved one.

Lynn Wood, Caregiver Support Coordinator, with Mental Health America of the MidSouth, will speak on Managing Difficult Behaviors in the Elderly. Lynn will speak about identifying the reason behind the behaviors, responding to the behaviors, what are the most common behaviors, and redirection techniques for behaviors.



January's lunchtime session will be held on Thursday, January 21, 2021 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Please RSVP (stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu) for Zoom details by Wednesday, January 20.