

## Purple mark on penis? <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

I took a piss and found a purple mark on my penis. I have taken a blood test, and the results are on the way to check for HIV, but I can't wait. What do you think it is? Did I just masturbate too hard? I did just yesterday.

—Blue is my favorite color, not purple

### Answer

Dear Blue is my favorite color, not purple,

Bruises and bumps are no fun, especially when they appear somewhere sensitive, like a penis. It's certainly possible that the purple mark you've noticed is a bruise, although bruising is not typically a symptom of HIV. Bruises develop when the small blood vessels under the skin get broken — what may have happened if you "masturbated too hard." A bruise will usually go away on its own within a few weeks. Another possibility is that blood pooled underneath the skin after an injury, causing a hematoma. Unlike with a regular bruise, the skin may feel lumpy or spongy. Like bruises, though, hematomas are not usually a cause for concern.

A purple mark on the skin might also be a blood spot. Blood spots may either be small, flat, red or purple spots or look more like a bruise. They are not caused by an injury. Sudden, unexplained, and/or more frequent blood spots or bruising may be due to inflammation of the blood vessels, some nutritional deficiencies, a bleeding or clotting disorder, or certain medications. You should see your health care provider if you notice that

- The mark doesn't go away within a few weeks;
- You notice other bruises or blood spots where you haven't been hurt;
- You get large bruises after minor injuries;
- You have bleeding from the gums, nose, or intestinal tract (blood in the stool); or
- You are experiencing any pain,

as these can be signs of a more serious problem.

It sounds like your concerned about HIV. Do you think you've been exposed to the bodily fluids (sexual fluids or blood) of a person with HIV? HIV is commonly transmitted through having unprotected sex or sharing needles with an infected person — neither of which would necessarily lead to bruising or purple marks on a penis — but if you've had either type of exposure, you've taken a great first step by getting tested. It may ease your mind to talk with your primary care provider. Since you've already had an HIV test, you can ask your her/him about other possible causes of the spot in question when you go to get your test results. Take care,

Alice!

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