

Black eye cure? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

What is the best cure for a black eye?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Black eyes, whether they're on tumbling toddlers or professional boxers, are like spotlights calling attention to the injury — maybe that's why they're called "shiners." The skin and blood vessels surrounding the eye are very delicate, so even minor bumps to the eye or forehead can cause bleeding. Gravity encourages the blood to pool in the eyelid and area under the eye, creating swollen red, blue, and/or black bruises. Fortunately, in most cases, bruises around the eye (medically known as periorbital hematomas) cause more stares than permanent eye damage, with most of the visible signs dissipating within one-and-a-half weeks.

Most black eyes can be treated at home using the following formula:

- **Cool it down.** Ice packs or cold compresses during the first twenty-four hours, particularly when used promptly after being injured, could help minimize bleeding and swelling. Raw steaks that have traditionally been put on black eyes were done so because the meat is cold, not because it has any special healing properties. Ice wrapped in a washcloth or a baggie of frozen veggies are more suitable steak substitutes.
- **Avoid a swelled head.** Keep your head elevated (sleep with a few extra pillows, for example) to help limit swelling and pooling. Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as acetaminophen, can also help relieve discomfort. Avoid aspirin since it decreases the blood's ability to clot.
- **Apply moist heat.** On the second day following the injury, applying warm washcloths or compresses can help increase circulation to the injured tissue. This aids in the re-absorption of any leftover blood that has collected at the injury site, promoting healing.

If you experience any of the following signs, you should seek immediate medical attention to rule out more serious damage to the eye and the surrounding bones, tissue, and nerves:

- Impaired sight, including blurriness, seeing double, "floaters," or increased sensitivity to light
- Pain from or trouble with moving the eye when looking up or down, to the left or right, or in any direction
- Blood or broken blood vessels on the "white" of the eye, or any laceration to the eyelid (outside or inside surface) or the eyeball itself
- Numbness of the face on the same side as the injury
- Swelling or depression of the eye or eye socket (an eye that appears to be sunken into the face or bulge from its socket)
- Dizziness

Most black eyes are caused by accidental rather than intentional injuries, often during sports or at work. They can be prevented through the proper use of goggles, helmets, and other safety gear that are appropriate for the activity being engaged in. Check out the [Prevent Blindness America](#) [2] web site for more detailed tips on protecting your peepers.

Alice!

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[Medical Services \(CUIMC\)](#) [9]

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