



## NUTRITIONALLY SPEAKING

# I get black and blue easily

by George Meinig, D.D.S.

**DEAR DR. MEINIG:** I bruise so easily, I'm black and blue all over. My arms look like they have been tattooed blue. The slightest bump or bruise and the spot turns blue immediately. My physician passes off my questions, always talking of something else. Is there anything I can do or take to help?  
W.M.

**DEAR W.M.:** This condition is a weakness of the outer walls of our blood vessels and capillaries. The blood flows from the heart into large blood vessels, but these channels decrease to smaller and smaller size until they become minute capillaries. The outer walls of the capillaries have the essential function of transferring nutrients in the blood to our tissues, and picking up waste to return for disposal.

This is a very delicate mechanism, as the outer wall of these tiny vessels is composed of only a single layer of cells. These cells contain and are bound together by fibers and connective tissue, which in turn are bound together by an intercellular substance. When the cementing substance loses its normal characteristics, the cell walls become too permeable and/or fragile, allowing them to rupture.

These two conditions are called capillary fragility and capillary permeability. Either one may be caused by an assortment of diseases, infections, bacterial toxins, drugs, chemicals, metabolic, and/or nutritional factors. Whatever the cause, when these delicate pipes carrying our blood and its nutrients become weakened, the slightest bump, bruise, or pressure can rupture its wall and allow the blood to ooze into the surrounding tissues. The blue color you see is the blood that has accumulated under the skin.

Our capillary and blood vessel walls should be strong enough to hold and contain the blood, and at the same time allow nutrients to pass through them and nourish our tissues. When they are weak, many abnormal conditions or diseases can result. For example, diabetic retinitis, rheumatoid arthritis, spontaneous abortion, bleeding gums and nosebleeds are but a few. It is often obvious that other causes for these conditions are also present, but too often this very basic structural defect is not recognized as a key factor. It should not be too hard to visualize capillary fragility or permeability, as this is a prime consideration in the cause of little strokes that result from small amounts of bleeding in the brain.

Commonly used medical text books unfortunately carry very little information on this subject. That is probably why your doctor has avoided your question. It isn't because information does not exist. As long ago as 1956, some 63 papers had been submitted dealing with these matters.

**THE FIRST WORK** on the subject was submitted in 1936 by Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, the discoverer of vitamin C. In 1936 he reported that substances present in lemon juice and paprika had beneficial effects on capillary fragility. He called it vitamin P. The California Fruit Growers Exchange quickly followed up with their own research and from 1947 to 1952 the Southern Bioresearch Laboratories did more extensive studies.

Successive reports were numerous. For example, when 2,065 hospital patients were treated with vitamin P (now called bioflavonoids), 85 percent had decreased radiation "erythema." However, at the same time, others reported poor results. Research showed that synthetic vitamin P, prepared and extracted from citrus pulp and peel, but not in the manner originated by Dr. Szent-Gyorgyi, was at fault. However, these negative arguments led professional men away from using bioflavonoids.

More recently, vitamin C has been quite frequently prescribed for bleeding problems, with bleeding gums receiving the most attention. Vitamin C works fine if its lack is the only cause for the gum problem, but most cases of gingivitis are due to accumulation of tarter deposits and other causes, so here too, many had poor results.

The bioflavonoids, and rutin which is one of them, have been available over-the-counter for a long time. While they are considered a part of the vitamin C complex, it has only been in the last year or two that bioflavonoids were included in vitamin C preparations.

In correcting capillary fragility, patients must realize that this breakdown in strength of blood vessel walls needs complete nutrition to correct it. Vitamin C and bioflavonoids are a tremendous help, but in themselves are not the total answer. Other key supplements are rutin, calcium, choline, and an oil soluble chlorophyll complex, but all the known 40 nutrients are needed for tissue strength and health.

While most people will begin to notice some lessening of the black and blue marks and reduction in their frequency, it is necessary to remember that this rebuilding is a slow process and may take several years to achieve. The important thing is that with attention to possible causes and improved nutrition along with supplements, a change for the better can occur.

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