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Hematoma

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Synonyms

[Blood clot](#); [Bruise](#)

Definition

A hematoma is a collection of blood outside of the blood vessels, usually resulting from internal hemorrhage. It could derive from an artery, vein, or capillary, when any of them are damaged and blood leaks out of the vessel. Hematomas that are bruises of the skin and soft tissue are called ecchymoses; Blood collections inside muscles are called intramuscular hematomas, while blood collections between muscle layers are called intermuscular hematomas.

Current Knowledge

Bleeding into the skull and brain may cause intracranial, intracerebral, subdural, or epidural hematomas. While a hematoma is a stable collection of blood, hemorrhage is the term applied to the active process of bleeding. Blood that escapes from the blood vessel is irritating to the tissues and may cause inflammation and pain, swelling, and redness. Symptoms of a hematoma depend on its size and location, and whether it causes swelling and inflammation. Some hematomas are managed with observation, while others require surgical treatment.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Hemorrhage](#)
- ▶ [Hemorrhagic Stroke](#)
- ▶ [Subdural Hematoma](#)

References and Reading

Zimmerman, L. H. (2007). Causes and consequences of critical bleeding and mechanisms of blood coagulation. *Pharmacotherapy*, 27(9, pt 2), 45S–56S.