

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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What are hickies and what's the best way to get rid of them?

A hickey is a bruise caused by someone sucking or nibbling on the skin. Hickies can be made anywhere on the body, but they are most commonly found on the neck. Just like any other bruise, a hickey appears when blood vessels are broken near the surface of the skin. This small amount of blood to leak into the tissues just below the skin. As it heals, you may notice it turning a rainbow of colors, including blue, purple, red, and greenish-yellow.

The only way to get rid of a hickey (and any other bruise) is time and patience. While the healing process may take up to 2 weeks, here are a few tips that will help any bruise to the skin, including hickies:

- Put an ice or cold pack on it right away to reduce pain and swelling. Repeat the cold treatment several times a day for 10 to 20 minutes

each session. Don't have ice or a cold pack? Keep a spoon in the freezer and use as needed. Spoons are a good size to cover hickies and they are convenient to hold!

- For the first 48 hours after getting the hickies, avoid activities that may increase swelling, such as hot showers, hot tubs, hot packs, or alcoholic beverages.
- Protect the area from further "trauma."
- Gently massage the hickey to increase blood flow and relieve pain. Be careful not to rub the area if it hurts too much.

Of course there are other cover-up options to try until your body heals itself: make-up, hair styles, shirt collars, and scarves. And, you can always talk to your partner about preventing them in the first place.



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