Why Does Lupus Lead to Easy Bruising?

by BARBARA LEECH

Understanding Lupus Bruising

A purple butterfly may be the universal sign for lupus, but sometimes black and blue seems to be a more accurate color for the disease. Lupus appears to give me a visible beating at times, with multiple bruises popping up all around my body for no apparent reason or injury.

Sometimes severe itching occurs before the lupus bruising and I am left wondering if I caused the massive bruise by simply scratching my itch, or if the itch was the bruise actually forming (chicken or egg, I have no idea which came first). I have asked doctors over the years, and there never seems to be any great concern expressed for what clearly is not normal as far as I, the patient, am concerned.

“Did you see this four-inch bruise caused by NOTHING?!” Before my diagnosis, doctors would either blame whatever medication I was on or check my blood platelets to rule out cancer, which it never was, thankfully, but I never received any solid explanation either.

I also experience easy scarring from anything that happens to my skin. Be it a bruise, a mosquito bite or the discoid rash I get from the lupus. A scar remains for months and in some cases, forever. Even simple little acne I get will now take longer than normal to heal and then leave a mark that is visible months later.

Why Am I Bruising So Easily With Lupus?

Here is what I have learned from my latest group of doctors and fellow lupies:

- People with lupus can experience bruising that seems unexplainable.
- This type of illness-related bruising is often caused by a low platelet count in the blood because the body's autoimmune system attacks healthy platelets as well as those that have been infected with viruses or bacteria.
- Platelets are responsible for blood clotting, and the inability to clot properly will ultimately lead to increased or more severe lupus bruising.

- Normal blood clotting can also be affected by the medications we take like aspirin
- NSAIDs and steroids like prednisone can also cause severe bruising by disrupt platelets, which can cause black and blue marks to appear, even over something as simple and benign as scratching an itch
- You can’t really predict or prevent it — the best advice is to take good care of your skin by staying hydrated and moisturizing with unrefined coconut oil

This is where I would normally give more advice. Unfortunately, other than to say, “Me too!” I am at a loss.

This is all I have to offer: love yourself. Know that your beauty and divine perfection lies within you, in your strength and courage to keep going, to fight this disease and be all you can be for the people who love you.

If you find that you need courage to face the world with these bruises and scars, borrow some of mine. If you are asked questions about these battle scars (as I call them) and don’t wish to explain, laugh it off and make up an amazing story where you battled the wolf — and it was you, the lupus warrior that won.