

Gastrointestinal Bleed, Lower, Discharge Information

What is a lower gastrointestinal hemorrhage?

A lower gastrointestinal (GI) hemorrhage, also called lower GI bleeding or rectal bleeding, is abnormal blood loss from the colon, rectum, or anus (the opening of the rectum). It is usually seen as blood on or in a bowel movement, on the toilet tissue after wiping, or in the toilet bowl water. The blood may be easily seen or it may be hidden, requiring testing of the bowel movements to know it is there. Common causes include tears in the skin of the anus or hemorrhoids. Bleeding may also be from small pockets that form in weak parts of the colon wall and stick out. These pockets or pouches can bleed and may not stop bleeding on their own. Other possible causes of rectal bleeding include infections of the intestine, inflammatory bowel disease, colon cancer, or bleeding in the upper digestive system.

How can I take care of myself when I go home?

How long it takes to get better depends on the cause of your lower GI bleed, your treatment, how well you recover, your overall health, and any complications you may have. You may need to make lifestyle changes to improve your health and to help keep the lower intestine as healthy as possible, prevent GI irritation, or prevent another lower GI bleed. Some simple lifestyle changes can help the intestines work better, as well as prevent constipation, hemorrhoids, and diverticula.

Management

- Your provider will give you a list of your medicines when you leave the hospital.
 - Know your medicines. Know what they look like, how much you should take each time, how often you should take them, and why you take each one.
 - Take your medicines exactly as your provider tells you to.
 - Carry a list of your medicines in your wallet or purse. Include any nonprescription medicines and supplements on the list.
- You may need to stop any medicines that irritate your GI tract.
- Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Treat GI irritation
 - Treat or prevent an infection
 - Replace iron lost from bleeding
 - Prevent constipation
- If you have had surgery, to care for your incision:
 - Keep your incision clean.

- If you are told to change your dressing on your incision, wash your hands before changing the dressing and after disposing of the dressing.

Appointments

- Follow your provider's instructions for follow-up appointments.
- Keep appointments for any routine testing you may need.
- Talk with your provider about any questions or fears you have.

Diet, Exercise, and Other Lifestyle Changes

- Follow the treatment plan your healthcare provider prescribes.
- Get plenty of rest while you're recovering. Try to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- You may need to make changes in some of the foods you eat. Ask your provider about the benefits of talking to a dietician to learn what you need in a healthy diet.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Exercise regularly as your provider recommends.
- Find ways to make your life less stressful.

Call emergency medical services or 911 if you have new or worsening:

- Bowel movement with bright red blood
- Bright red blood in your vomit or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Fainting

If you have any of these symptoms, do not drive yourself.

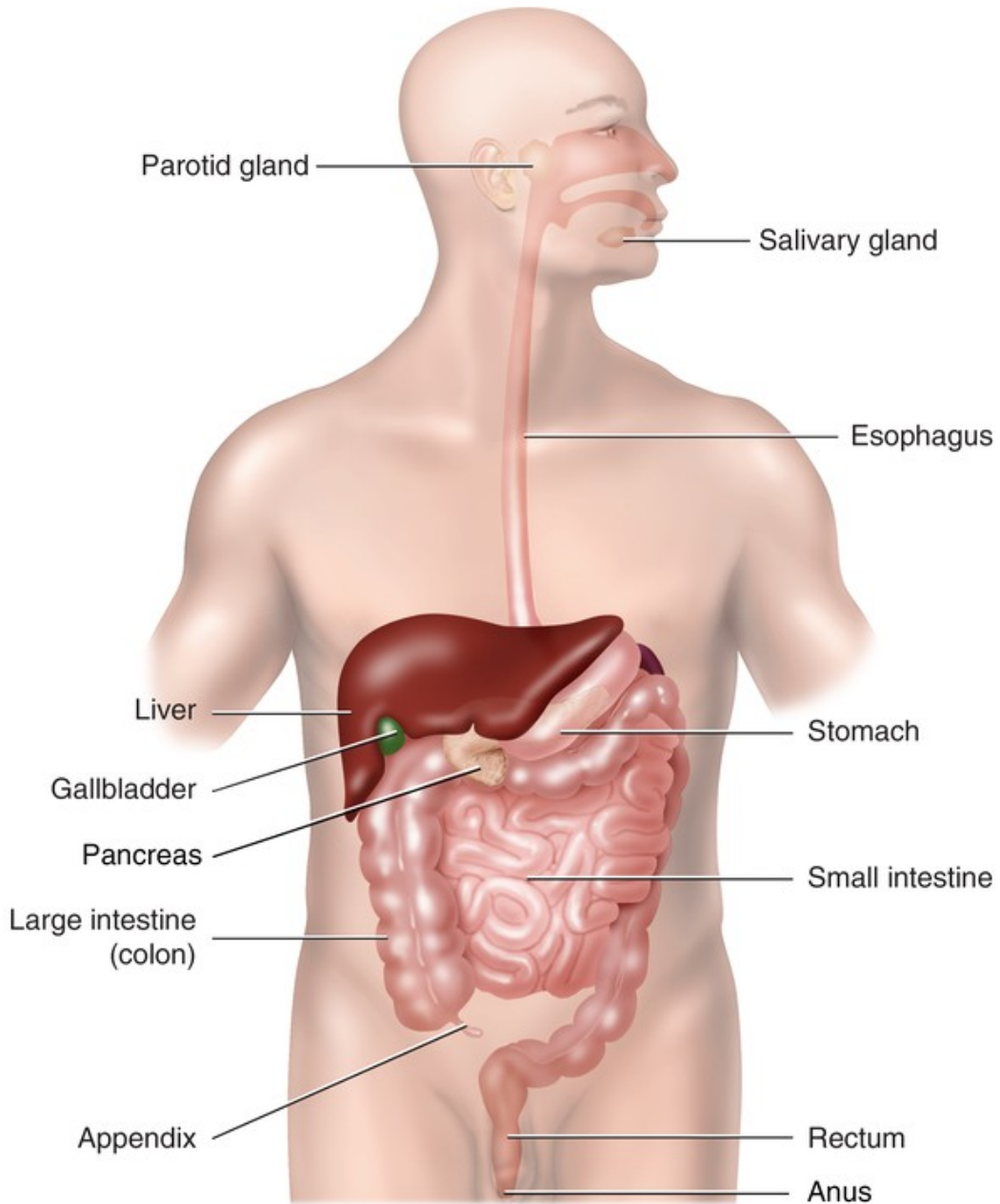
Call your healthcare provider if you have new or worsening:

- Abdominal bloating
- Abdominal cramps or pain
- Black, tarry bowel movements
- Change in bowel habits, such as pain, mucus, diarrhea, constipation, or other intestinal problems
- Tiredness
- Signs of infection around your surgical wound if you had surgery. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful
 - Your wound area is very warm to touch
 - You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from the wound area
 - You have a fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
 - You have chills or muscle aches

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Digestive System



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