

# Gastrointestinal Bleed, Upper, Discharge Information

## What is an upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage?

An upper gastrointestinal (GI) hemorrhage, also called upper GI bleeding, is abnormal blood loss from the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth and stomach), the stomach, or the duodenum (the first foot of the small intestine that follows the stomach). It is usually seen as bloody vomit, vomit that looks like coffee grounds, or bowel movements that are black and sticky.

The most common cause of upper GI bleeding is an ulcer in the stomach or small intestine. Irritation of the stomach or esophagus can also cause an upper GI bleed. A group of medicines called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen, are common causes of stomach and esophagus irritation. Another common cause of bleeding is liver disease from chronic alcohol use. Sometimes the esophagus bleeds because it is torn after forceful coughing or vomiting.

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

You may need to make lifestyle changes to improve your health and to help prevent GI irritation or another GI bleed.

### 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 nausea and vomiting
- 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.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Exercise as your provider recommends.
- Don't smoke. Smoking can worsen ulcers.
- If the bleeding was caused by alcohol abuse, follow your healthcare provider's recommendations to stop drinking.
- Ask your healthcare provider if there are any foods or medicines you should avoid.
- Lose weight if you need to and keep a healthy weight.
- Find ways to make your life less stressful.

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

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

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

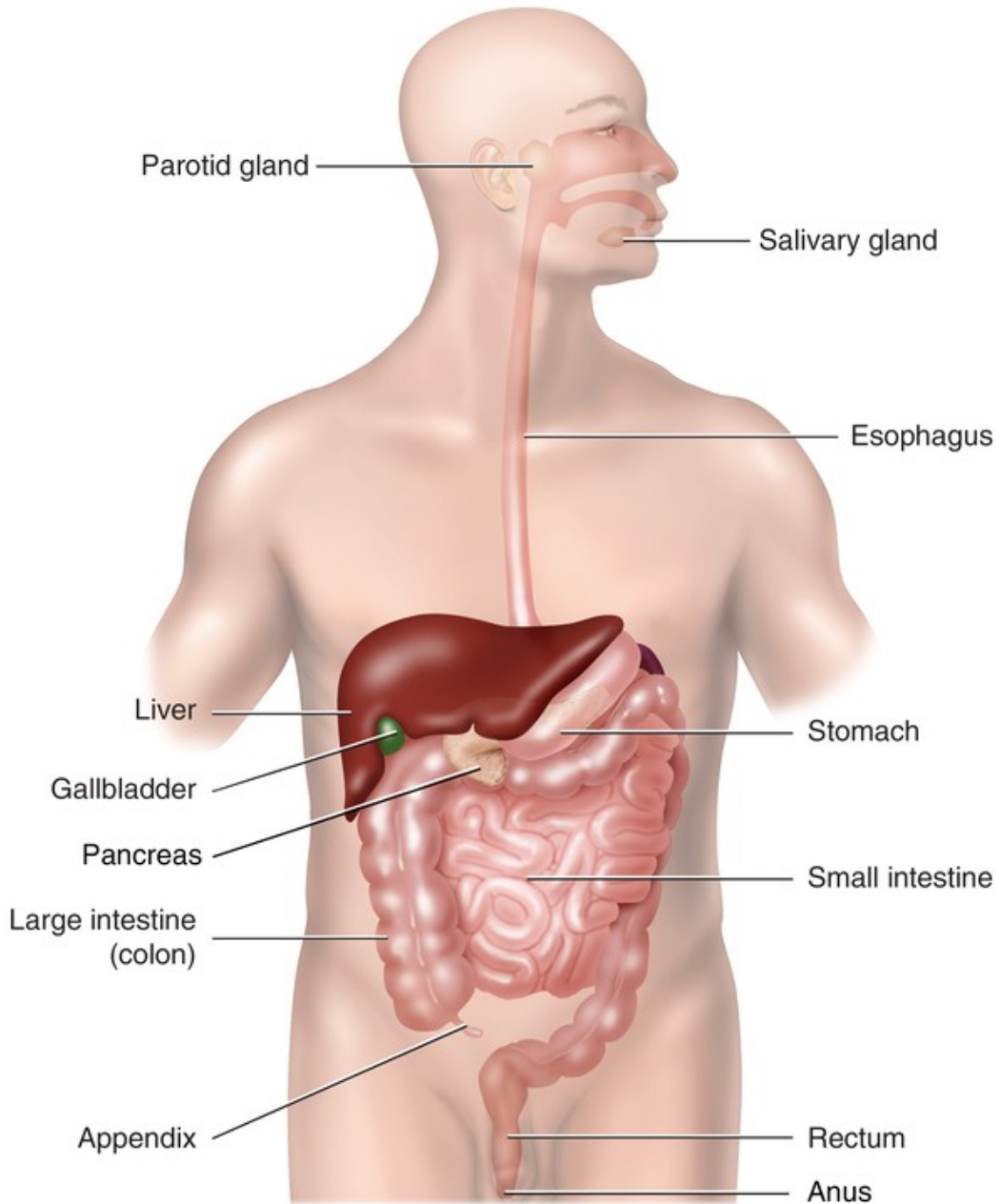
### **Call your healthcare provider if you have new or worsening:**

- Abdominal bloating
- Abdominal cramps or pain
- Acid indigestion
- 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 a fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
  - You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from the wound area
  - You have chills or muscle aches

Developed by RelayHealth.

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# Digestive System



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