

Nonvariceal Upper Gastrointestinal Bleeding

Upper gastrointestinal bleeding (UGIB) refers to bleeding in the upper part of the digestive system, to include the esophagus, stomach, and the beginning of the small intestine. The most common type is nonvariceal UGIB, which is bleeding not related to liver disease. The most common causes are an ulcer or nonsteroid anti-inflammatory drug use, such as aspirin or ibuprofen. Symptoms can be obvious, such as blood in vomit or stool, or hidden, seen only through stool or blood tests. To find the source of the bleeding, endoscopy is often done, where a thin tube with a camera is inserted into the body, usually through the mouth.

For initial diagnosis of UGIB without an endoscopy, CT angiography (CTA) of the abdomen and pelvis without and with intravenous (IV) contrast is usually appropriate. If endoscopy has shown the cause of bleeding but treatment is not possible, or if there is continued bleeding after endoscopic treatment, visceral arteriography (an x-ray scan of arteries in the abdomen with IV contrast) or CTA of the abdomen and pelvis without and with IV contrast is usually appropriate. When endoscopy has not revealed a clear cause, CTA of the abdomen and pelvis without and with IV contrast is usually appropriate. When endoscopy has not identified any bleeding, CT enterography (imaging of the small intestine with oral contrast) or CTA of the abdomen and pelvis without and with IV contrast is usually appropriate. When the known cause of bleeding is a recent surgery or injury and performing endoscopy is not safe, visceral arteriography or CTA of the abdomen and pelvis without and with IV contrast is usually appropriate.

Disclaimer

This information is copied from the RadiologyInfo Web site (http://www.radiologyinfo.org) which is dedicated to providing the highest quality information. To ensure that, each section is reviewed by a physician with expertise in the area presented. All information contained in the Web site is further reviewed by an ACR (American College of Radiology) - RSNA (Radiological Society of North America) committee, comprising physicians with expertise in several radiologic areas.

However, it is not possible to assure that this Web site contains complete, up-to-date information on any particular subject. Therefore, ACR and RSNA make no representations or warranties about the suitability of this information for use for any particular purpose. All information is provided "as is" without express or implied warranty.

Please visit the RadiologyInfo Web site at http://www.radiologyinfo.org to view or download the latest information.

Note: Images may be shown for illustrative purposes. Do not attempt to draw conclusions or make diagnoses by comparing these images to other medical images, particularly your own. Only qualified physicians should interpret images; the radiologist is the physician expert trained in medical imaging.

Copyright

This material is copyrighted by either the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), 820 Jorie Boulevard, Oak Brook, IL 60523-2251 or the American College of Radiology (ACR), 1891 Preston White Drive, Reston, VA 20191-4397. Commercial reproduction or multiple distribution by any traditional or electronically based reproduction/publication method is prohibited.

Copyright ® 2025 Radiological Society of North America, Inc.