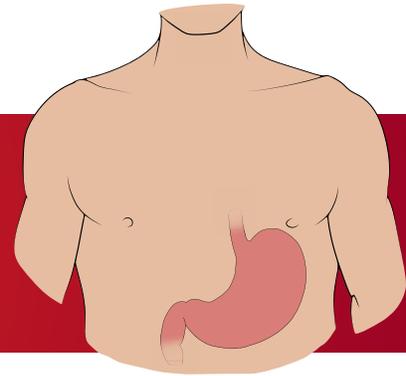


Action Plan for Staying Healthy at Home After an Upper GI (Gastrointestinal) Bleed



This handout is a quick guide to staying healthy and safe at home. Follow these tips and all instructions from your hospital care team to help you avoid another hospital stay.

Take Your Medicines

Some special guidelines to note:

- You may be taking a medicine to reduce acid in your stomach, such as a proton pump inhibitor (PPI). Take these medicines on an empty stomach, 30 minutes before eating.
- If your doctor tells you to take an iron supplement, take it with Vitamin C tablets or orange juice. This helps the iron absorb in your body. Iron supplements may make your bowel movements very dark.
- To lower the chances of bleeding, do not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs) unless approved by your doctor. NSAIDs include Ibuprofen, Advil, Naproxen, Aleve and aspirin. If you take aspirin for your heart, keep taking it as instructed by your doctor. Tylenol may be taken, as directed on the box, for minor aches and pains.
- If you are on anticoagulation (blood thinner) or antiplatelet therapy, talk to your doctor about how to best continue these medicines.

Go to Your Follow-Up Visits

It is **very** important to go to your follow-up visits with your primary care doctor or GI doctor (gastroenterologist). Your doctor needs to see you at follow-up visits to check on your progress and make sure your medicines are working. They need to see you within 1 week of your hospital stay and then at least once a month for 3 months.

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Ways to Stay Well



- Eat a healthy diet based on advice from your care team.
- If you have been diagnosed with GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease), avoid the items listed below to help reduce symptoms:
 - Caffeine (coffee, regular tea, chocolate) and mints (peppermint and spearmint)
 - High acid foods such as citrus fruits and juices, bubbly drinks, tomato products
 - Fried, greasy or spicy foods
 - Garlic and onions
 - Alcohol and tobacco
- Eat sitting upright, not slouched or lying down and stay upright for 1 hour after eating
- Try not to eat 4 hours before going to bed
- When sleeping, keep the head of the bed raised by 6 to 8 inches. To do this, use blocks or a mattress wedge – do not use extra pillows.
- Exercise – before starting any exercise program, ask your doctor if it's safe to do so.
- If need help quitting smoking:
 - Call the Ohio Quit Line at **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or visit **smokefree.gov**
 - Find out if your insurance covers our UH Tobacco Treatment Counseling program. If so, you will need a doctor's order to use this service. To learn more about our program, call **216-896-1810**.

Hang this on your refrigerator to remind you of reasons to call your doctor or 911



GOOD TO GO

Follow the tips in this handout to help you to stay healthy and out of the hospital. Always monitor your health and be aware of the signs of new or worsening health concerns. Read below to learn when and who to call for help.



CAUTION

Call your doctor's office right away if you have any of the problems listed below. Your doctor may need to adjust your medicine doses and/or order blood tests. Keep taking your medicines as ordered until you see your doctor.

- Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea) or throwing up (vomiting)
- Vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Bowel movements that are black or look like tar
- Changes in appetite or feeling full faster
- Belly pain that is new or getting worse
- Bloated belly
- Weight loss
- Feeling more weak or tired
- Any other symptom that causes concern

My doctor's name: _____

Office phone number: _____



STOP

Call 9-1-1 right away if you have any of these problems:

- Throwing up red or dark blood
- Bright red in bowel movements
- Feeling short of breath or it is hard to breathe
- Fainting
- Heart racing or feels like it is skipping a beat
- Feeling dizzy, lightheaded or confused