

Mallory-Weiss syndrome refers to a tear or laceration of the mucous membrane, most commonly at the point where the esophagus and the stomach meet (gastroesophageal junction). Such a tear may result in severe bleeding from the gastrointestinal tract. The immediate cause of the lesion is usually a protracted period of vomiting. In most instances, the immediate cause of Mallory-Weiss syndrome is severe vomiting. This can be associated with chronic alcoholism, but MWS may also result from a severe trauma to the chest or abdomen, chronic hiccups, intense snoring, lifting and straining, inflammation of the lining of the stomach (gastritis) or esophagus (esophagitis), hiatus hernia, convulsions or CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy may develop this disorder as a complication of chemotherapy. Mallory-Weiss syndrome accounts for 1 to 15% of all gastrointestinal bleeding episodes. However, it occurs more frequently in individuals with alcoholism. MWS appears to affect more males than females. The ages of those affected varies considerably, with a peak at ages 40 through 60. However, some cases have been reported in children. The diagnosis of Mallory-Weiss syndrome is usually determined by endoscopic examination of the esophagus membrane.