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Gastrointestinal Bleeding

Also called: GI bleeding

Your digestive or gastrointestinal (GI) tract includes the esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine or colon, rectum, and anus. Bleeding can come from any of these areas. The amount of bleeding can be so small that only a lab test can find it.

Signs of bleeding in the digestive tract depend on where it is and how much bleeding there is.

Signs of bleeding in the upper digestive tract include:

- Bright red blood in vomit
- Vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Black or tarry stool
- Dark blood mixed with stool

Signs of bleeding in the lower digestive tract include:

- Black or tarry stool
- Dark blood mixed with stool
- Stool mixed or coated with bright red blood

GI bleeding is not a disease, but a symptom of a disease. There are many possible causes of GI bleeding, including hemorrhoids [<https://medlineplus.gov/hemorrhoids.html>], peptic ulcers [<https://medlineplus.gov/pepticulcer.html>], tears or inflammation in the esophagus, diverticulosis and diverticulitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/diverticulosisanddiverticulitis.html>], ulcerative colitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ulcerativecolitis.html>] and Crohn's disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/crohnsdisease.html>], colonic polyps [<https://medlineplus.gov/colonpolyps.html>], or cancer in the colon [<https://medlineplus.gov/colorectalcancer.html>], stomach [<https://medlineplus.gov/stomachcancer.html>] or esophagus [<https://medlineplus.gov/esophagealcancer.html>].

The test used most often to look for the cause of GI bleeding is called endoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/endoscopy.html>]. It uses a flexible instrument inserted through the mouth or rectum to view the inside of the GI tract. A type of endoscopy called colonoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/colonoscopy.html>] looks at the large intestine.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- Gastrointestinal (GI) Bleeding [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/gastrointestinal-bleeding>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/sangrado-gastrointestinal>]
- GI bleeding - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100162_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100162_1.htm]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Abdominal Pain (Stomach Pain), Long-Term [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/abdominal-pain-stomach-pain-long-term/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/dolor-en-el-abdomen-largo-plazo/?adfree=true>]
- Abdominal Pain (Stomach Pain), Short-Term [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/abdominal-pain-stomach-pain-short-term/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/dolor-en-el-abdomen-de-corta-duracion/?adfree=true>]
- Capsule Endoscopy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/capsule-endoscopy/about/pac-20393366?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/tests-procedures/capsule-endoscopy/about/pac-20393366?p=1>]
- Colonoscopy: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/colonoscopy.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/colonoscopy.html>]
- Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/fecal-occult-blood-test-fobt/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-sangre-oculta-en-heces/>]
- Lower GI Series (Barium Enema) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/lower-gi-series>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/transito-gastrointestinal-inferior>]
- Small Bowel Bleeding [<https://gi.org/topics/small-bowel-bleeding/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
Also in Spanish [<https://gi.org/patients/recursos-en-espanol/sangrado-del-intestino-delgado-causas-diagnostico-y-tratamiento/>]
- Upper GI Endoscopy [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-endoscopy>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [[https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-esofagogastrroduodenal](https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-gastrointestinal-superior?dkrd=/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-esofagogastrroduodenal)]

Related Issues

- Stool Color: When to Worry [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diarrhea/expert-answers/stool-color/faq-20058080?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/stool-color/expert-answers/faq-20058080?p=1>]
- Vomiting Blood [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/vomiting-blood/basics/definition/SYM-20050732?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/symptoms/vomiting-blood/basics/definition/sym-20050732?p=1>]

Specifics

- Esophageal Varices [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/esophageal-varices/symptoms-causes/syc-20351538?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/esophageal-varices/symptoms-causes/syc-20351538?p=1>]
- Proctitis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/proctitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20376933?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/proctitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20376933?p=1>]
- Proctitis [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/proctitis>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
- Rectal Bleeding [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/rectal-bleeding/basics/definition/SYM-20050740?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/symptoms/rectal-bleeding/basics/definition/sym-20050740?p=1>]
- Understanding Minor Rectal Bleeding [<https://www.asge.org/home/for-patients/patient-information/understanding-minor-rectal-bleeding>] (American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Gastrointestinal Hemorrhage [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Gastrointestinal+Hemorrhage%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Clinical efficacy of surgically assisted transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt for cavernous... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40741105>]
- Article: Deep learning-based localization and lesion detection in capsule endoscopy for patients... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40741104>]
- Article: A randomized controlled trial comparing large-volume band ligator and cyanoacrylate injection... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40715299>]
- Gastrointestinal Bleeding -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Gastrointestinal+Hemorrhage%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Your Digestive System and How It Works [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/aparato-digestivo-funcionamiento>]

Find an Expert

- American College of Gastroenterology [<https://gi.org>]
- ASGE: Find a Doctor [<https://www.asge.org/find-a-doctor-results>] (American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)
- Find a Gastroenterologist (GI Doctor) [<https://gi.org/patients/find-a-gastroenterologist/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Children

- Collecting a Stool Sample for Testing (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/stool-tests-done.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/stool-tests-done.html>]
- Stool Tests (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/labtest8.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/labtest8.html>]
- Upper GI Bleeding in Children [<https://gikids.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/BleedingUpperGI-English-FINAL.pdf>] (North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition) - **PDF**

Patient Handouts

- Black or tarry stools [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003130.htm>]
- Bleeding esophageal varices [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000268.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000268.htm>]
- Gastrointestinal bleeding [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003133.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003133.htm>]
- Mallory-Weiss tear [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000269.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000269.htm>]

- Vomiting blood [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003118.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003118.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Black or tarry stools](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm>]

[Bleeding esophageal varices](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000268.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000268.htm>]

[Enteroscopy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003889.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003889.htm>]

[Ferritin blood test](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003490.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003490.htm>]

[Gastrointestinal bleeding](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003133.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003133.htm>]

[Gastrointestinal perforation](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000235.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000235.htm>]

[GI bleeding - series](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100162_1.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100162_1.htm]

[Mallory-Weiss tear](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000269.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000269.htm>]

[Mesenteric angiography](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003819.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003819.htm>]

[RBC nuclear scan](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003835.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003835.htm>]

[Stool guaiac test](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003393.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003393.htm>]

[Vomiting blood](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003118.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003118.htm>]

Related Health Topics

[Hemorrhoids](https://medlineplus.gov/hemorrhoids.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/hemorrhoids.html>]

[Peptic Ulcer](https://medlineplus.gov/pepticulcer.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/pepticulcer.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Gastrointestinal Bleeding* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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[\[https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html).

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