



How to Prevent Esophageal Varices from Hemorrhage

1.What is esophageal varices?

Esophageal Varices is a common complication of liver cirrhosis. It is caused by portal hypertension. As portal pressure rises, the esophagogastric veins dilate and distend. These engorged and dilated veins are called varices. The esophageal varices can rupture and cause hemorrhage. It usually occurs at the low end of the esophagus.

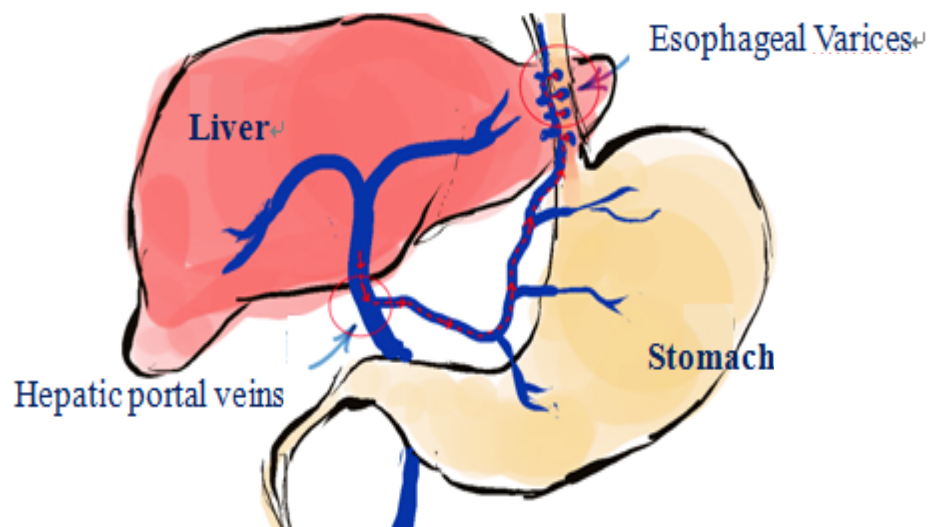


Figure 1 Esophageal varices

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All information above has been reviewed by Gastroenterology specialists
Edited and published by the Department of Nursing,
Taichung Veterans General Hospital

2.What are the symptoms of esophageal varices bleeding?

Esophageal varices bleeding usually don't have symptoms at first, and only develop symptoms such as tarry stool or vomiting blood when it gets serious.



Vomiting blood

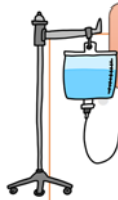


Tarry stool



Dizziness
palpitation

3.How to manage ruptured esophageal varices?



1. Drug therapy

- To administer vasopressin (Glypressin/Sandostatin) to decrease portal pressure.

2. Sengstaken-Blakemore tube (SB tube)

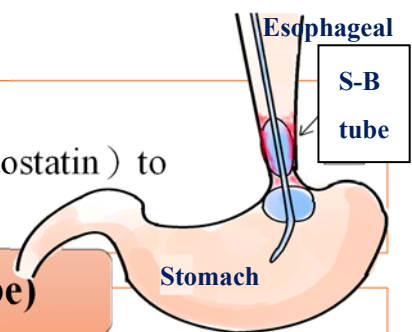
- To insert a Sengstaken-Blakemore tube to compress bleeding varices.

3. Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD)

- Endoscopic Injection Sclerotherapy: inject a sclerosing agent (e.g.: histoacryl) during an endoscopy to cause venous thrombosis and fibrosis.
- Esophageal Variceal Ligation : wrap elastic bands around the esophageal varices during an endoscopy.

4. Surgical Treatment





- Due to advances in prophylactic endoscopic injection sclerotherapy and ligation, surgical treatment is rarely performed.


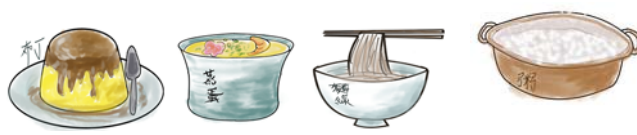


4. Dietary Principles after esophageal varices bleeding:

Patients with acute bleeding should be fasting, and follow healthcare providers' instruction on when to start eating after treatment.

When starting to eat, follow the instructions below:

 <p>Bland diet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid irritating food • Easy to chew • Easily digestible 	 <p>Food texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquid diet ↓ <i>progressive</i> • Soft diet
 <p>Chew slowly</p>	 <p>Drug miling</p>

	Direction	Example
Liquid diet	Use a blender to blend food into smooth liquid.	Ex : milk, rice water, Oil-free clear soup, juice. 
Soft diet	Avoid rough or hard foods such as nuts.	Ex : gruel, steamed egg, bean curd, pudding 、Vermicelli. 

5 、 Care after treatment:

Bland Diet

- Avoid fried food and too hard, rough, hot or cold.
- Avoid irritating food, such as alcohol, coffee, spices, sour.



Avoid fatigue

- Keep a regular life style and a steady mood.



Avoid straining maneuvers

- Ensure smooth bowel movements(at least once a day), avoid straining when passing stool, and pay attention to the color of stool.
- Avoid violent coughing and heavy-lifting.



Take medicine and follow up

- Take medicine by doctor's order.
- Return to the OPD for follow-up after discharge.



Pay attention to rebleeding signs

- If any of these following signs appears, visit the hospital as soon as possible: fever, pale, tachypnea, tachycardia, agitated, tarry stool, or bloody vomitus.



6. Conclusion

Esophageal Varices require regular and repeated examination and treatment. Before that, there's still a risk of bleeding. Patients with esophageal varices should maintain healthy lifestyle, take medicine as instructed, return to the OPD for follow-up, and control underlying disease, such as liver cirrhosis or tumor, in order to reduce the risk of rebleeding.



7. Reference

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