

NICE quality standards

Information for the public

Issue date: July 2013

Information for people who use NHS services for acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding

The NICE quality standard for acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding sets out what high-quality care in the NHS in England should include, so that the best care can be offered to people with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding using NHS services in England. Acute bleeding is sudden, severe bleeding that can be life-threatening and should be treated as an emergency in hospital.

NICE quality standard for acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding

The quality standard for acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding is made up of 10 statements that describe high-quality care for patients. These statements are about the best care you should receive and are summarised below.

1. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding have an assessment of their risk of more bleeding or complications, using an accepted scoring system.
2. People with severe acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding whose blood pressure and/or pulse is unstable are given an endoscopy (a procedure using a narrow, flexible tube that is swallowed and has a very small camera at its tip) within 2 hours of being resuscitated.
3. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding whose blood pressure and pulse are stable and who are admitted to hospital are given an



endoscopy (a procedure using a narrow, flexible tube that is swallowed and has a very small camera at its tip) within 24 hours of admission.

4. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding caused by stomach or duodenal ulcers are offered treatment using an endoscope (a narrow, flexible tube that is swallowed and has a very small camera at its tip).

5. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding from the stomach or duodenum who continue to bleed or re-bleed after endoscopic treatment and whose blood pressure or pulse is unstable are given interventional radiology treatment. A long narrow plastic tube called a catheter is inserted into an artery in the groin and, under X-ray guidance, is then steered to the site of bleeding. After a small injection of X-ray dye to confirm that the tube is in the right place, the bleeding artery is blocked off to stop the bleeding. A CT scan may be needed beforehand to guide treatment if endoscopy has not identified the site of bleeding.

6. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding known or suspected to be caused by enlarged veins are given antibiotics when they first see a healthcare professional.

7. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding caused by enlarged veins in the oesophagus (gullet) are given band ligation, a type of elastic band that helps to stop the bleeding.

8. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding caused by enlarged veins in the stomach are given an injection of N-butyl-2-cyanoacrylate, a substance that helps to stop the bleeding. This injection is given using an endoscope (a narrow, flexible tube with a camera at its tip).

9. People with uncontrolled acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding caused by enlarged veins are given a procedure called transjugular intrahepatic

portosystemic shunts (also called TIPS). In a TIPS procedure the veins feeding into the liver and those draining it are connected so that the blood flow is redirected and the pressure in the enlarged veins is lowered.

10. People with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding who have had a stroke or heart attack, and are taking aspirin to prevent another, are advised to continue on aspirin when their bleeding has stabilised.

Your care

In the NHS, patients and healthcare professionals have rights and responsibilities as set out in the NHS Constitution (www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england). All NICE quality standards are written to reflect these. You have the right to be involved in discussions and make informed decisions about your treatment and care with your healthcare team. Your choices are important and healthcare professionals should support these wherever possible. You should be treated with dignity and respect.

Information from NICE about acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding

The full quality standard for acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding, written for healthcare professionals, is available from <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/QS38>.

NICE also produces guidance (advice) for the NHS in England and Wales about preventing, diagnosing and treating medical conditions, based on the best available evidence.

NICE has produced guidance on acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding, available from <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG141>. The guidance was used to develop this quality standard.

Information for the public about the care and treatment recommended in the NICE guidance on acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding is available from <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG141>. It is written to help patients, their families and carers to understand the care and treatment options that should be available in the NHS.

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