Upper GI & Ulcer Bleeding

Risk stratification, pre-endoscopic care, endoscopic hemostasis, and post-hemostasis management of ulcer bleeding.

2021 ACG Clinical Guideline
Upper Gastrointestinal and Ulcer Bleeding
Laine et al. · Am J Gastroenterol 2021;116:899–917

GRADE — Strong Rec — Conditional Rec

1 Risk Stratification & Transfusion

2 — **Very-low-risk patients** (e.g., Glasgow-Blatchford score 0–1) can be **discharged** with outpatient follow-up rather than admitted.

2 — **Restrictive RBC transfusion** policy — threshold hemoglobin **7 g/dL**.

2 Pre-Endoscopic Medical Therapy

2 — **Erythromycin infusion** before endoscopy.

NR — **No recommendation** for or against pre-endoscopic PPI therapy.

3 Timing & Indications for Endoscopy

2 — Endoscopy **within 24 hours** of presentation for admitted/observed patients.

1 — **Endoscopic therapy** for ulcers with **active spurting, active oozing, or nonbleeding visible vessels**.

NR — **No recommendation** for or against therapy in ulcers with **adherent clot** resistant to vigorous irrigation.

4 Choice of Hemostatic Modality

STATEMENT	GRADE
Bipolar electrocoagulation, heater probe, or absolute ethanol injection for bleeding ulcers	1 · Strong
Clips, argon plasma coagulation, or soft monopolar electrocoagulation as options	2 · Conditional
Epinephrine injection not used alone — must combine with another hemostatic modality	1 · Strong
Hemostatic powder spray TC-325 for actively bleeding ulcers	2 · Conditional
Over-the-scope clips for recurrent bleeding after previous successful hemostasis	2 · Conditional

5 Post-Hemostasis Antisecretory Therapy

1 — **High-dose PPI** (continuous or intermittent) for **3 days** after successful endoscopic hemostasis.

2 — **High-risk patients**: continue **twice-daily PPI** until **2 weeks** after index endoscopy following inpatient high-dose therapy.

6 Recurrent & Refractory Bleeding

2 — **Repeat endoscopy + endoscopic therapy** for recurrent bleeding — preferred over surgery or transcatheter arterial embolization.

2 — **Transcatheter arterial embolization** next step after **failed endoscopic therapy**.

Laine L, Barkun AN, Saltzman JR, Martel M, Leontiadis GI. ACG Clinical Guideline: Upper Gastrointestinal and Ulcer Bleeding. *Am J Gastroenterol.* 2021;116(5):899–917.