

About Esophageal Variceal Ligation (EVL)



What are esophageal varices (veins)?

Esophageal varices are big swollen veins in your esophagus (swallowing tube). They are caused by the backing up of blood that cannot flow through your damaged liver. These veins are weak and bleed easily under pressure. Things that cause pressure on them are straining to have a bowel movement, coughing, sneezing, throwing up or bending over.

What can the doctor do to treat these veins?

The doctor can put rubber bands around the swollen vein. The vein will finally shrink up. This procedure is called esophageal variceal ligation (EVL). You may have to come back more than once to have the swollen veins banded until they are all gone.

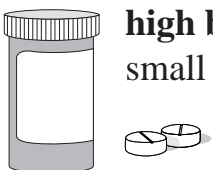
What should I do the night before the EVL?

- **Do not** eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your EVL.
- If you take **insulin**, take one-half of your regular bedtime dose.
- Plan to have someone drive you home after the EVL. You will be sleepy from the medicine. That person can wait in the GI Lab waiting room during the EVL, or the nurse will call them for you after your EVL is over.



What should I do the morning of the EVL?

- Bring all your medicines with you on the day of your visit. If you take medicine for **high blood pressure**, seizures, or breathing medicines, take your regular dose with a small sip of water on the morning of the EVL.



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- Do not take any **insulin** the morning of your EVL.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothes. Leave jewelry and other valuables at home or with a relative or friend.

What should I do after the EVL?

For the first 48 hours after you go home:

- Do not eat any hard or solid food. This could make the rubber bands come off and your varices could bleed.
- You should only have liquids or soft food.



- You should take the purple medicine (Carafate) if your doctor has given you a prescription. Mix the medicine in a tablespoon of water and drink it. This coats your esophagus and keeps it from being irritated.



- Straining while having a bowel movement, coughing, or sneezing too hard, suddenly bending over, throwing up or exercising too hard could cause your rubber bands to come off.
- You may have some chest pain. This should go away within 2 days.
- **Do not drive until the next day.**

Come to the emergency room if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Black and tarry stools for more than 48 hours.
- Throwing up bright red blood.
- Chest pain for more than 2 days.
- Shortness of breath.
- Painful swallowing for more than 3 days.

