Sengstaken-Blakemore Tube

A Sengstaken-Blakemore tube is a large red rubber tube which stops or slows bleeding from the esophagus and stomach. It is often called a Blakemore tube for short.

The tube is put in through the nose or mouth and passes into the stomach. There are three openings (ports) seen at the end of the tube to:

- Take fluid and air out of the stomach, called the gastric aspirate
- Put air into a balloon in the stomach, called the gastric balloon
- Put air into a balloon in the esophagus, called the esophageal balloon

When the balloons are inflated, they put pressure on the areas that are bleeding. Pressure from the balloons helps stop the bleeding.

It is often necessary to put in an endotracheal tube. This tube prevents breathing problems in case the Blakemore tube moves. While the endotracheal tube is in place, the patient cannot talk, eat or drink.

The Blakemore tube may be in place for several days. It is taken out when the bleeding stops. The patient may have a sore throat for a short time from the tube after it is out.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.