

Nitrates

nitroglycerin spray

(Apo-Nitroglycerin[®], Mylan-Nitro[®],

RHO-Nitro[®], Nitrolingual[®])

nitroglycerin sublingual tablet

(Nitrostat[®])

Pharmacy Services

This is intended as a general reference.

It does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.



What are nitrates?

Nitrates are a group of medicines with nitroglycerin as the ingredient. These medicines are “vasodilators” which means they relax (dilate) blood vessels. This allows more blood flow and oxygen to reach the heart muscle.

What is angina?

Angina is chest pain that happens when your heart muscle does not get enough oxygen-rich blood. Angina is a sign that blood vessels of your heart are blocked. You might hear it called coronary artery disease or heart disease.

Angina can feel like a tightness, heaviness, pressure, or squeezing in the chest. Angina pain can also extend into the arm or shoulder, most often on the left side, as well as into the back and jaw. Some people do not have any pain at all. Instead, they might feel short of breath, feel weak, get very sweaty, or feel generally unwell.

When should I use this type of nitroglycerin?

The spray and tablet form of this medicine are “quick acting”. They give instant relief from chest pain. Sometimes, we refer to them as emergency angina medicine.

Use the spray or a tablet **only when you need it** – at the first sign of chest pain.

What should I expect?

Your chest pain should ease and go away within 5 minutes of using either the spray or tablet.

Call 9-1-1 if your chest pain is not better within 5 minutes.



How do I use the nitroglycerin spray?

At the first sign of chest pain, **sit down**.

Then follow these instructions.

1. Remove the cover.
2. Hold the container upright.
Do not shake the container.
3. For using the first time and when spray has not been used in the last 6 weeks:
 - Point the spray nozzle away from yourself, others, and an open flame.
 - Pump into the air to prime the pump.
4. Bring the container close to your open mouth.
5. Put your finger on top of the grooved button.
6. Press down firmly to release one (1) spray **on or under** your tongue.
Do not breathe in while doing this.
7. Close your mouth. **Try not to swallow the spray**.
8. For 5 minutes, do not eat, spit, or rinse your mouth.

Call **9-1-1** if your chest pain is not better within 5 minutes.

9-1-1



You can use the spray again in 5 minutes if the pain returns.

Do not use more than 3 sprays in 15 minutes.

How do I use the nitroglycerin tablets?

At the first sign of chest pain, **sit down**.

Then follow these instructions.

1. Place one tablet under your tongue or between your cheek and gum.
2. **Let the tablet dissolve all the way.**
Do not chew, suck on, or swallow the tablet.
3. While the tablet is dissolving, do not eat, drink, or smoke.

Call 9-1-1 if your chest pain is not better within 5 minutes.

9-1-1



You can use another tablet in 5 minutes if the pain returns.

Do not use more than 3 tablets in 15 minutes.

Where should I keep the spray or tablets?

- Keep your spray or tablets with you at all times.
- Keep your extra supply in a dry place. Do not keep extra supply in places that are humid or where the temperature changes often, such as in a bathroom or car.
- Keep tablets in their original container. Make sure the lid is tightly closed.
- Keep this medicine out of reach of children and pets.

What should I watch for?

Most people tolerate nitroglycerin spray or tablets well. Some side effects to watch for:

- feeling dizzy
- headaches – usually mild and improve with time
- flushed or reddened face

Always sit down before using this medicine.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects bother you, don't go away, or get worse.



Other helpful points

Never take medicines for erectile dysfunction, such as sildenafil (Viagra®) or tadalafil (Cialis®). When taken with the nitroglycerin patch, you can get severely dizzy and lightheaded, and your blood pressure can drop to a dangerously low level.

Always check with your pharmacist or doctor before starting new medicines or supplements, including herbal medicines, and alternative and natural products.

If you have any questions about this medicine:

- Ask your pharmacist.
- Ask your doctor.
- Call HealthLinkBC **8-1-1** or TTY 7-1-1
 - Speak to a nurse any time, any day.
 - Speak to a pharmacist any day from 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

HealthLinkBC is open 24 hours. Available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

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