

# Nitroglycerin Sublingual

Nitroglycerin is a fast-acting drug used to relieve chest pain (angina). It also goes by the brand names NitroBid or NitroStat. Nitroglycerin can be taken by pill or aerosol spray. It is not habit forming or addicting. You may take nitroglycerin for chest pain even if you wear a nitroglycerin patch.

For your safety, **always carry your nitroglycerin with you.**

## Pills

1. Always sit down before using nitroglycerin.
2. If you have chest discomfort or pain that is not helped by 2 to 3 minutes of rest, place 1 tablet under your tongue. **Do not swallow the tablet.**
3. If you still have chest pain after 3 to 5 minutes, put a second tablet under your tongue. **If you still have chest pain or your chest pain gets worse, call 911 and seek emergency treatment. Do not drive.**
4. If the chest pain does not go away after another 3 to 5 minutes, use a third tablet. You may take up to a total of 3 tablets in 15 minutes.
5. If you still have pain after a total of three (3) tablets in 15 minutes, **call 911 or your emergency squad.** Do not drive yourself to the hospital because you may be having a heart attack.

Nitroglycerin pills should cause a stinging sensation under your tongue if they are fresh. If it does not sting, your tablets may have lost some of their strength.

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**To safely store your nitroglycerine pills:**

- Keep tablets in the original package.
- Replace unused tablets every 6 months. Talk to your pharmacist for new tablets.
- Keep the tablets in a cool, dry place when you are not carrying them.
- Ask the pharmacist for a small bottle of 25 tablets to carry in your pocket or purse.

**Aerosol Spray (NitroMist)**

1. Sit down when using this medicine
2. Hold the can up with the spray button on top.
3. Hold the can as close to your mouth as you can and spray onto or under the tongue.

**Warnings**

- **If you are taking Nitroglycerin, avoid using medicines for erectile dysfunction, such as Sildenafil (Viagra), Tadalafil (Cialis) or Vardenafil (Levitra).** Use of nitroglycerin after taking these medications may lead to a serious decrease in blood pressure. If you have used one of these medications and have chest pain, do not take the nitroglycerin. Contact your doctor and seek emergency treatment right way.
- **If you have these side effects, get medical treatment right away:**
  - ▶ Swelling in the mouth or throat
  - ▶ Severe headache or dizziness
  - ▶ Cold sweats
  - ▶ Shortness of breath
  - ▶ Blurred vision
  - ▶ Bluish color in hands or feet

## Side Effects

There are less serious side effects of taking nitroglycerin:

- Nitroglycerin may cause short-term weakness or lightheadedness. For your safety, sit down. If you are lying down, move to a sitting position before slowly standing.
- The medicine may cause the face and neck to look flushed after a dose.
- The medicine may cause nausea, irritated throat or runny nose.
- The medicine may cause a headache. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be taken up to 650 milligrams (mg). Do not take more than 650 mg without talking to your doctor or pharmacist. Check the label of the medicine bottle for the dose strength.

✦ **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](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**