

Cardiovascular Medications

Nitroglycerin

(Nitroquick, Nitrotab, Nitrostat)

USED TO TREAT:

- Discomfort from heart attack or angina.
- Typical symptoms include uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain in the chest.
- The discomfort also may be felt in the left chest, neck, jaw, shoulder, back, or arm.
- Additional warning signs include shortness of breath, palpitations, excessive weakness, dizziness or lightheadedness, and nausea. These symptoms may vary in intensity, occur alone or in any combination, and may vary with each episode.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Dilates (opens) arteries of the heart, providing more oxygen to heart muscle.
- Also dilates veins in legs, which decreases the amount of blood returning to the heart.
- This decreases the workload of the heart and oxygen needs relieving chest discomfort.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE:

- Keep nitroglycerin with you at all times.
- At the first sign of angina, you should **sit or lie down**. Use caution when returning to standing position.
- Nitroglycerin should be placed under tongue if symptoms do not resolve within 3-5 minutes. It may be repeated every 5 minutes for a total of three doses. No more than 3 nitroglycerin tablets or pump sprays should be taken within 15 minutes.
- **Call 911** immediately to access emergency medical services with first nitroglycerin tablet.

- Store the tablets at room temperature (68-77°F) in the original glass container, tightly capped, away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
- The cotton should be discarded once the cap is removed. Do not store in automobile, bathroom medicine cabinet, or refrigerator.
- If stored outside of recommended guidelines, such as carried close to your body for prolonged period, supply may need to be replaced before the expiration date.
- May be stored in a FDA-approved stainless steel pendant, replacing tablets according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Use of nitroglycerin with alcohol may cause low blood pressure.
- Do not use Phosphodiesterase-5 Enzyme Inhibitor (medications for erectile dysfunction) such as Viagra (Sildenafil), Cialis (Tadalafil), Levitra (Vardenafil), Stendra (Avanafil) if taking nitroglycerin.
- You may take Nitrostat as needed even if you are on longer lasting nitrates (pill or patch). Report any angina to your doctor so that adjustments may be made in your medical plan.

SIDE EFFECTS:

- Headache
- Flushing of skin
- Low blood pressure (dizziness, lightheadedness, weakness, collapsing)
- Burning under the tongue

East Jefferson General Hospital
Cardiac Rehab Department
504-503-4145