

## What if I have chest pain or discomfort?

1. Stop what you are doing and sit down.
2. Spray 1-2 puffs about one second apart (or put one tablet) under the tongue, and close your mouth.
3. Wait for 5 minutes (use a clock to time this). If the pain or discomfort has completely gone away, then you do not need to repeat the dose.
4. If the pain or discomfort has **NOT** gone away, then repeat the dose (if you feel dizzy then lie down).
5. Wait for a further 5 minutes.
6. If the pain or discomfort has not gone away completely **PHONE 999**. If you are not allergic to aspirin, chew an aspirin tablet (300mg) if one is easily available. Just stay resting until the ambulance arrives.
7. If at anytime you experience increased chest pain, breathlessness or sweating, call 999 straight away.

### IMPORTANT

It is important that you do not drive yourself to hospital.

Use 999 to call for an emergency ambulance, who will do tracing of your heart (ECG) as soon as they reach you to check whether you are having a heart attack or not. This is because we want to identify and treat a heart attack without delay.

## Where can I get a repeat GTN prescription?

You can get repeat prescriptions from your GP Practice.

## We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website [www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback) or share your story at: [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236) Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm.

Version: 3      Review Date: July 2026  
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### Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar  
NHS Western Isles

## How to use your GTN medication



Useful information and advice

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about using your Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN) medication to treat your chest pain/discomfort.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

## What is GTN and how does it work?

Glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) is a spray (or tablet) used to relieve the pain of angina (pain or discomfort usually felt in the chest but may also be felt in the jaw, throat, one or both arms, shoulders or back).

It helps to open the coronary arteries and improve the blood supply to the heart muscle.

## How do I use GTN?

You should carry your GTN medication with you at all times but only use it if you develop chest pain or discomfort.

If using a spray, spray one to two puffs, around one second apart (or put one tablet) under your tongue, following the instructions overleaf.

## Are there any side effects?

Common side effects are a result of the widening of the blood vessels in other areas of the body apart from the heart.

Headaches can be relieved by taking paracetamol (following the instructions on the paracetamol packet).

Dizziness can be minimised by sitting or lying down.

Both these side effects are temporary and usually become less of a problem over time.

## Is there anything else I need to know?

You should continue to carry your GTN medication with you unless otherwise instructed by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Always read the leaflet that comes with the GTN medication and see your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns.

GTN is usually supplied in spray form and lasts up to three years. It is very important that your GTN spray is always in date, in case you need to use it. Therefore please make sure that you regularly check the expiry date of your spray and get a new prescription from your GP Practice before this has passed.

GTN tablets can be a useful alternative if you are sensitive to GTN spray. The tablet is taken under the tongue and takes effect within two to three minutes, but the tablets are **not effective if swallowed**.

GTN tablets should be stored in their original container, in a cool dry place. Tablets should not be transferred from the original container to another bottle. Once the bottle has been opened, it must be replaced in eight weeks.

GTN is not addictive or habit forming.

GTN can also be purchased from a chemist without a prescription.

You should carry your GTN with you at all times.

Do not share your medication with anyone else.

If you find the need to take GTN more often, you should make an appointment to see your GP as soon as possible.

GTN can be taken before you do anything that you know will cause angina.

In cold or windy weather you may find it useful to take GTN before going outside.

Do not use GTN if you are taking Viagra or a similar tablet (Sildenafil, Vardenafil or Tadalafil).

Please report to your GP if you have an increase in your chest pain symptoms or if they start to occur when at rest.