

# GLYCERYL TRINITRATE

**Brand names** Coro-Nitro, Deponit, Minitran, Nitro-Dur, Nitrolingual, Percutol, Rectogesic, Suscard, Transiderm-Nitro, and others  
**Used in the following combined preparations** None

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Glyceryl trinitrate is a type of vasodilator known as a nitrate and is used to relieve the pain of angina attacks. It is available in short-acting forms (sublingual or buccal tablets, ointment, and spray) and long-acting forms (slow-release tablets and patches). The short-acting forms act very quickly to relieve angina. Glyceryl trinitrate is also given by injection in hospital for severe angina, heart failure,

and to control high blood pressure. It may cause a variety of minor symptoms, such as flushing and headache, most of which can be controlled by adjusting the dosage. Glyceryl trinitrate is best taken for the first time while sitting, as fainting may follow the drop in blood pressure caused by the drug.

Glyceryl trinitrate may also be used topically to treat anal fissures.

## QUICK REFERENCE

**Drug group** Anti-angina drug (p.59)

**Overdose danger rating** Medium

**Dependence rating** Low

**Prescription needed** No (most preparations); Yes (injection)

**Available as generic** Yes

## INFORMATION FOR USERS

**Follow instructions on the label. Call your doctor if symptoms worsen.**

### How taken/used



Buccal tablets, sublingual tablets, injection, ointment, gel, skin patches, spray.

### Frequency and timing of doses

**Angina prevention** 3 x daily (buccal tablets); every 3–4 hours (ointment); once daily (patches).

**Angina relief** Use buccal or sublingual tablets, ointment, or spray at the onset of an attack or immediately prior to exercise. Dose may be repeated within 5 minutes if further relief required.

**Anal fissure** Every 12 hours for up to 8 weeks.

### Adult dosage range

**Angina prevention** 2–15mg daily (buccal tablets); 5–15mg daily (patches); as directed (ointment).

**Angina relief** 0.3–1mg per dose (sublingual tablets); 1–3mg per dose (buccal tablets); 1–2 sprays per dose (spray).

**Anal fissure** 3mg daily in 2 equal doses.

### Onset of effect

**Angina** 1–3 minutes (buccal and sublingual tablets and spray); 30–60 minutes (patches and ointment).

**Anal fissure** 12 hours.

### Duration of action

20–30 minutes (sublingual tablets and spray); 3–5 hours (buccal tablets and ointment); up to 24 hours (patches); up to 12 hours (anal fissure preparations).

### Diet advice

None.

### Storage

Keep sublingual tablets in an airtight glass container fitted with a foil-lined, screw-on cap in a cool, dry place out of the reach of children. Protect from light. Do not expose to heat. Discard tablets within 8 weeks of opening. Check label of other preparations for storage conditions.

### Missed dose

If your next dose is due within 6 hours, skip the missed dose and take your next scheduled dose as usual (buccal tablets); take as soon as you remember, or when needed. If your next dose is due within 2 hours, take a single dose now and skip the next (other preparations).

### Stopping the drug

Do not stop taking the drug without consulting your doctor.

### Exceeding the dose

An occasional unintentional extra dose is unlikely to cause problems. Large overdoses may cause symptoms such as dizziness, vomiting, severe headache, sweating, seizures, or loss of consciousness. Notify your doctor.

## SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

**Be sure to consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking this drug if:**

- You have any other heart condition.
- You have a lung condition.
- You have long-term liver or kidney problems.
- You have any blood disorders.
- You have glaucoma.
- You have thyroid disease.
- You have low blood pressure.
- You have anaemia.
- You have a recent head injury or stroke.
- You are taking other medicines.



### Pregnancy

Safety in pregnancy not established. Discuss with your doctor.



### Breast-feeding

It is not known whether the drug passes into the breast milk. Discuss with your doctor.



### Infants and children

Not usually prescribed.



### Over 60

No special problems.



### Driving and hazardous work

Avoid such activities until you have learned how glyceryl trinitrate affects you because the drug can cause dizziness.



### Alcohol

Avoid excessive intake. Alcohol may increase the risk of lowered blood pressure, causing dizziness and fainting.

## POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The most serious adverse effect is lowered blood pressure, which may cause fainting and collapse. Other adverse effects usually

decrease in severity after regular use and can also be controlled by an adjustment in dosage.

Symptom/effect	Frequency		Discuss with doctor		Stop taking drug now	Call doctor now
	Common	Rare	Only if severe	In all cases		
Headache	●		●			
Flushing	●		●			
Dizziness	●			●		
Fainting/collapse		●		●	●	●

## INTERACTIONS

**Antihypertensive drugs and other anti-angina drugs** These drugs increase the possibility of lowered blood pressure or fainting when taken with glyceryl trinitrate.

**Sildenafil, tadalafil, and vardenafil** The hypotensive effect of glyceryl trinitrate is increased significantly by these drugs; they should not be used with glyceryl trinitrate.

## PROLONGED USE

The effects of the drug usually become slightly weaker during prolonged use as the body adapts. Timing of the doses may be changed to prevent this effect. Preparations for anal fissures should not be used for more than 8 weeks.

**Monitoring** Periodic checks on blood pressure are usually required when the drug is used for angina.