

## Glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) Spray and Tablets

### Summary

- Reduced blood supply to the heart causes the pain /discomfort known as angina.
- Sublingual GTN preparations enlarge blood vessels, thereby increasing the blood flow to the heart and alleviate angina chest pain
- NICE recommends that patients with angina are prescribed GTN, where not contraindicated.
- GTN tablets expire 8 weeks after opening.
- GTN sprays have a longer expiry of up to 3 years from the date of manufacture.

### Aim/Purpose/Background

- Identify patients prescribed GTN spray or tablets
- Identify patients with a diagnosis of angina not prescribed a GTN spray or tablets
- Review patient record with a view to ensuring they are only ordered when required
- Coro-nitro spray is the cost effective choice recommended when a spray is prescribed. [SPC/PIL](#)
- This is a quality and cost intervention.
- Further information [cks](#)

### Guidance for Action

- Run a report on patients currently prescribed GTN spray or tablets.
- Run a report on patients with a diagnosis of angina.
- Compare reports to identify patients with a diagnosis of angina not prescribed GTN tablets or spray – discuss with prescriber. See [SPC](#) for contraindications/special precautions.
- For patients prescribed GTN spray (with GP agreement):
  - Consider switching to cost effective product: Coro-nitro spray.
  - Discuss with patient by telephone where possible, frequency of use and adjust repeat template where appropriate. One spray contains 180 - 200 doses.
  - Confirm with the patient that they are aware of how to use their GTN spray.
  - Patients requiring a new GTN spray frequently, ordered at least monthly, should be highlighted to prescriber for review.
- For patients prescribed GTN tablets (with GP agreement):
  - Discuss with patient by telephone where possible, frequency of use and adjust repeat template where appropriate. Tablets are only effective for 8 weeks after the bottle has been opened.
  - Confirm with the patient that they are aware of how to use their GTN tablets.
  - Patients requiring GTN tablets frequently, ordered at least monthly, should be highlighted to prescriber for review.
  - Some patients may consider a spray more convenient - consider switching to cost effective product : Coro-nitro spray.

### How GTN sprays and tablets should be used

When an angina attack occurs, the person should stop what you are doing and rest. If the pain/discomfort persist, use the GTN Spray. The angina should go away completely. Many people know a certain activity will bring on angina, so actually find it helpful to use the medication before they start the activity.

### GTN Spray:

During application the patient should rest in the sitting position. The bottle should be kept vertical with the nozzle head uppermost. Hold the opening in the nozzle head as close to the open mouth as possible. Close the mouth immediately after each dose. There is no need to shake the canister. Spray under the tongue or onto the oral mucosa. The spray should not be inhaled.



# Think Medicines!

Spray one to two sprays under the tongue when a pain develops. Close the mouth immediately after using the spray. The pain should ease within a minute or so. If the first dose does not work, take a second after five minutes. If the pain persists use it again. If you have to use it 3 times (a total of 15 minutes) and the pain has still not gone away, you should then call 999 and wait for the ambulance.

Patients should also be instructed to familiarise themselves with the position of the spray opening for use at night.

#### **GTN tablets:**

One tablet should be placed under the tongue and allowed to dissolve slowly. The pain should ease within a minute or so. If the first dose does not work, take a second after five minutes. If the pain persists use it again. If you have to use it 3 times (a total of 15 minutes) and the pain has still not gone away, you should then call 999 and wait for the ambulance.

When using the tablets, the person should usually get a tingling sensation under the tongue. If they don't then a new supply of tablets may be needed. The tablets should not be transferred to any other container.

#### **Disposal of GTN Spray or Tablet Products**

Please Do Not Incinerate a GTN product on disposal – as they are **inflammable**.

Please return unwanted GTN products to your local Pharmacy where they will be disposed of safely.

