

## **PRESCRIBING INFORMATION**

**NITROSTAT<sup>\*</sup>**  
Nitroglycerin Tablets  
Manufacturer Standard  
0.3 mg, 0.6 mg

**VASODILATOR**

\* TM Warner-Lambert Company  
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### **PHARMACOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION**

Vasodilator

### **ACTIONS AND CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY**

The principal pharmacological action of nitroglycerin is relaxation of vascular smooth muscle. Although venous effects predominate, nitroglycerin produces, in a dose-related manner, dilation of both arterial and venous beds. Dilation of postcapillary vessels, including large veins, promotes peripheral pooling of blood, decreases venous return to the heart, and reduces left ventricular end-diastolic pressure (preload). Nitroglycerin also produces arteriolar relaxation, thereby reducing peripheral vascular resistance and arterial pressure (afterload), and dilates large epicardial coronary arteries; however, the extent to which this latter effect contributes to the relief of exertional angina is unclear.

Therapeutic doses of nitroglycerin may reduce systolic, diastolic, and mean arterial blood pressure. Effective coronary perfusion pressure is usually maintained, but can be compromised if blood pressure falls excessively or increased heart rate decreases diastolic filling time.

Elevated central venous and pulmonary capillary wedge pressures, and pulmonary and systemic vascular resistance are also reduced by nitroglycerin therapy. Heart rate is usually slightly increased, presumably due to a compensatory response to the fall in blood pressure. Cardiac index may be increased, decreased, or unchanged. Myocardial oxygen consumption or demand (as measured by the pressure-rate product, tension-time index, and stroke-work index) is decreased and a more favorable supply-demand ratio can be achieved. Patients with elevated left ventricular filling pressures and increased systemic vascular resistance in association with a depressed cardiac index are likely to experience an improvement in cardiac index. In contrast, when filling pressures and cardiac index are normal, cardiac index may be slightly reduced following nitroglycerin administration.

**Mechanism of Action:** Nitroglycerin forms free radical nitric oxide (NO) which activates guanylate cyclase, resulting in an increase of guanosine 3'5' monophosphate (cyclic GMP) in smooth muscle and other tissues. These events lead to dephosphorylation of myosin light chains, which regulate the contractile state in smooth muscle, and result in vasodilatation.

**Pharmacodynamics:** Consistent with the symptomatic relief of angina, digital plethysmography indicates that onset of the vasodilatory effect occurs approximately 1 to 3 minutes after sublingual nitroglycerin administration and reaches a maximum by 5 minutes postdose. Effects persist for at least 25 minutes following NITROSTAT administration.

### Pharmacokinetics and Drug Metabolism

**Absorption:** Nitroglycerin is rapidly absorbed following sublingual administration of NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets). Mean peak nitroglycerin plasma concentrations occur at a mean time of approximately 6 to 7 minutes postdose (Table 1). Maximum plasma nitroglycerin concentrations ( $C_{max}$ ) and area under the plasma concentration-time curves (AUC) increase dose-proportionally following 0.3 to 0.6 mg NITROSTAT. The absolute bioavailability of nitroglycerin from NITROSTAT tablets is approximately 40% but tends to be variable due to factors influencing drug absorption such as sublingual hydration and mucosal metabolism.

Table 1

Parameter	Mean Nitroglycerin (SD) Values	
	2 x 0.3 mg NITROSTAT Tablets	1 x 0.6 mg NITROSTAT Tablets
$C_{max}$ , ng/mL	2.3 (1.7)	2.1 (1.5)
$t_{max}$ , min	6.4 (2.5)	7.2 (3.2)
AUC(0- $\infty$ ), ng/mL•min	14.9 (8.2)	14.9 (11.4)
$t_{1/2}$ , min	2.8 (1.1)	2.6 (0.6)

**Distribution:** The volume of distribution ( $V_{Area}$ ) of nitroglycerin following intravenous administration is 3.3 L/kg. At plasma concentrations between 50 and 500 ng/mL, the binding of nitroglycerin to plasma proteins is approximately 60%, while that of 1,2- and 1,3-dinitroglycerin is 60% and 30%, respectively.

**Metabolism:** A liver reductase enzyme is of primary importance in the metabolism of nitroglycerin to glycerol di- and mononitrate metabolites and ultimately to glycerol and organic nitrate. Known

sites of extrahepatic metabolism include red blood cells and vascular walls. In addition to nitroglycerin, 2 major metabolites 1,2- and 1,3-dinitroglycerin, are found in plasma. Mean peak 1,2- and 1,3-dinitroglycerin plasma concentrations occur at approximately 15 minutes postdose. The elimination half-life of 1,2- and 1,3-dinitroglycerin is 36 and 32 minutes, respectively. The 1,2- and 1,3-dinitroglycerin metabolites have been reported to possess approximately 2% and 10% of the pharmacological activity of nitroglycerin. Higher plasma concentrations of the dinitro metabolites, along with their nearly 10-fold longer elimination half-lives, may contribute significantly to the duration of pharmacologic effect. Glycerol mononitrate metabolites of nitroglycerin are biologically inactive.

**Elimination:** Nitroglycerin plasma concentrations decrease rapidly with a mean elimination half-life of 2 to 3 minutes. Half-life values range from 1.5 to 7.5 minutes. Clearance (13.6 L/min) greatly exceeds hepatic blood flow. Metabolism is the primary route of drug elimination.

### **INDICATIONS AND CLINICAL USE**

NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets) are indicated for the acute relief of an attack or acute prophylaxis of angina pectoris due to coronary artery disease.

### **CONTRAINDICATIONS**

Sublingual nitroglycerin therapy is contraindicated in patients with early myocardial infarction, severe anemia, increased intracranial pressure, and those with a known sensitivity or hypersensitivity to nitroglycerin or its ingredients, or other nitrates or nitrites.

Concomitant use of NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets) either regularly and/or intermittently, with phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors such as sildenafil citrate (VIAGRA<sup>†</sup>) is absolutely contraindicated since sildenafil citrate has been shown to potentiate the hypotensive effects of nitrates.

## **WARNINGS**

The benefits of sublingual nitroglycerin in patients with acute myocardial infarction or congestive heart failure have not been established. If one elects to use nitroglycerin in these conditions, careful clinical or hemodynamic monitoring must be used because of the possibility of hypotension and tachycardia.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

**General:** Only the smallest dose required for effective relief of the acute anginal attack should be used. Excessive use may lead to the development of tolerance. NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets) are intended for sublingual or buccal administration and should not be swallowed.

Severe hypotension, particularly with upright posture, may occur with small doses of nitroglycerin. This drug should therefore be used with caution in patients who may be volume-depleted or who, for whatever reason, are already hypotensive. Hypotension induced by nitroglycerin may be accompanied by paradoxical bradycardia and increased angina pectoris.

Nitrate therapy may aggravate the angina caused by hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

As tolerance to other forms of nitroglycerin develops, the effects of sublingual nitroglycerin on exercise tolerance, although still observable, is blunted.

In industrial workers who have had long-term exposure to unknown (presumably high) doses of organic nitrates, tolerance rarely occurs. Chest pain, acute myocardial infarction, and even sudden death have occurred during temporary withdrawal of nitrates from these workers, demonstrating the existence of true physical dependence.

Several clinical trials of nitroglycerin patches or infusions in patients with angina pectoris have evaluated regimens which incorporated a 10 to 12 hour nitrate free interval. In some of these trials, an increase in the frequency of anginal attacks during the nitrate free interval was observed in a small number of patients. In one trial, patients had decreased exercise tolerance at the end of the nitrate interval. Hemodynamic rebound has been observed only rarely; on the other hand, few studies were so designed that rebound, if it had occurred, would have been detected.

Nitrate tolerance as a result of sublingual nitroglycerin administration is probably possible, but only in patients who maintain high continuous nitrate levels for more than 10 or 12 hours daily. Such use of sublingual nitroglycerin would entail administration of scores of tablets daily and is not recommended.

The drug should be discontinued if blurring of vision or drying of the mouth occurs. Excessive dosage of nitroglycerin may produce severe headaches.

### **Pregnancy**

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Nitroglycerin should be given to a pregnant woman only if clearly needed.

### **Lactation**

It is not known whether nitroglycerin is excreted in human milk. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk, caution should be exercised when nitroglycerin is administered to a nursing woman.

### **Use in Children**

Safety and effectiveness of nitroglycerin in children have not been established.

### **Use in the Elderly**

Clinical studies of NITROSTAT did not include sufficient numbers of subjects aged 65 and over to determine whether they respond differently from younger subjects. Other reported clinical experience has not identified differences in responses between the elderly and younger patients. In general, dose selection for an elderly patient should be cautious, usually starting at the low end of the dosing range, reflecting the greater frequency of decreased hepatic, renal, or cardiac function, and of concomitant disease or other drug therapy.

### **Drug Interactions**

**Hypotensive Agents:** Patients receiving antihypertensive drugs, beta-adrenergic blockers, or phenothiazines and nitrates should be observed for possible additive hypotensive effects. Marked orthostatic hypotension has been reported when calcium channel blockers and organic nitrates were used concomitantly.

**Alcohol:** Concomitant use of nitrates and alcohol may cause hypotension.

**Aspirin:** The vasodilatory and hemodynamic effects of nitroglycerin may be enhanced by concomitant administration of aspirin.

**Alteplase:** Intravenous administration of nitroglycerin decreases the thrombolytic effect of alteplase. Therefore, caution should be observed in patients receiving sublingual nitroglycerin during alteplase therapy.

**Heparin:** Intravenous nitroglycerin reduces the anticoagulant effect of heparin and activated partial thromboplastin times (APTT) should be monitored in patients receiving heparin and intravenous nitroglycerin. It is not known if this effect occurs following single sublingual nitroglycerin doses.

**Anticholinergic Agents:** Tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline, desipramine, doxepin, others) and anticholinergic drugs may cause dry mouth and diminished salivary secretions. This may make dissolution of sublingual nitroglycerin difficult. Increasing salivation with chewing gum or artificial saliva products may prove useful in aiding dissolution of sublingual nitroglycerin.

**Ergot Alkaloids:** Oral administration of nitroglycerin markedly decreases the first-pass metabolism of dihydroergotamine and subsequently increases its oral bioavailability. Ergotamine is known to precipitate angina pectoris. Therefore, patients receiving sublingual nitroglycerin should avoid ergotamine and related drugs or be monitored for symptoms of ergotism if this is not possible.

**Nitrates:** A decrease in therapeutic effect of sublingual nitroglycerin may result from use of long-acting nitrates.

**Phosphodiesterase Type 5 (PDE5) Inhibitors:** Concomitant use of NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin) and phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors such as sildenafil citrate (VIAGRA) has been shown to potentiate the hypotensive effect of NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin). This could result in life-threatening hypotension with syncope or myocardial infarction and death. Therefore, VIAGRA (sildenafil citrate) should not be given to patients receiving NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin).

### **Drug/Laboratory Test Interactions**

Nitrates may interfere with the Zlatkis-Zak colour reaction causing a false report of decreased serum cholesterol.

## **ADVERSE REACTIONS**

Headache, which may be severe and persistent may occur immediately after use. Vertigo, dizziness, weakness, palpitation, and other manifestations of postural hypotension may develop occasionally, particularly in erect, immobile patients. Marked sensitivity to the hypotensive effects of nitrates (manifested by nausea, vomiting, weakness, diaphoresis, pallor and collapse) may occur at therapeutic doses. Syncope due to nitrate vasodilation has been reported. Flushing, drug rash, exfoliative dermatitis, and urticaria have been reported in patients receiving nitrate therapy. Paradoxical bradycardia and increased angina pectoris may accompany nitroglycerin-induced hypotension. (See PRECAUTIONS.)

## **SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT OF OVERDOSAGE**

**Hemodynamic Effects:** The effects of nitroglycerin overdose are generally the results of nitroglycerin's capacity to induce vasodilatation, venous pooling, reduced cardiac output, and hypotension. These hemodynamic changes may have protean manifestations, including increased intracranial pressure, with any or all of persistent throbbing headache, confusion, and moderate fever; vertigo; palpitations; tachycardia; visual disturbances; nausea and vomiting (possibly with colic and even bloody diarrhea); syncope (especially in the upright posture); dyspnea, later followed by reduced ventilatory effort, diaphoresis, with the skin either flushed or cold and clammy; heart block and bradycardia; paralysis; coma; seizures; and death.

No specific antagonist to the vasodilator effects of nitroglycerin is known, and no intervention has been subject to controlled study as a therapy of nitroglycerin overdose. Because the hypotension associated with nitroglycerin overdose is the result of venodilatation and arterial hypovolemia, prudent therapy in this situation should be directed toward increase in central fluid volume. Passive elevation of the patient's legs may be sufficient, but intravenous infusion of normal saline or similar fluid may also be necessary.

The use of epinephrine or other arterial vasoconstrictors in this setting is likely to do more harm than good.

In patients with renal disease or congestive heart failure, therapy resulting in central volume expansion is not without hazard. Treatment of nitroglycerin overdose in these patients may be subtle and difficult, and invasive monitoring may be required.

**Methemoglobinemia:** Methemoglobinemia has been rarely reported in association with organic nitrates. The diagnosis should be suspected in patients who exhibit signs of impaired oxygen delivery despite adequate cardiac output and adequate arterial PO<sub>2</sub>. Classically, methemoglobinemic blood is described as chocolate brown, without color change on exposure to air.

If methemoglobinemia is present, intravenous administration of methylene blue, 1 to 2 mg/kg of body weight, may be required.

### **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**

Usual adult dosage ranges from 0.3 to 0.6 mg.

One tablet should be dissolved under the tongue or in the buccal pouch at the first sign of an acute anginal attack. The dose may be repeated approximately every five minutes, until relief is obtained. If the pain persists after a total of 3 tablets in a 15-minute period, prompt medical attention is recommended. NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets) may be used prophylactically five to ten minutes prior to engaging in activities which might precipitate an acute attack.

During administration for an acute angina attack, the patient should rest, preferably in the sitting position.

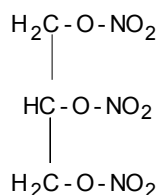
No dosage adjustment is required in patients with renal failure.

## PHARMACEUTICAL INFORMATION

### Drug Substance

Proper Name: Nitroglycerin  
 Chemical Name: 1,2,3-propanetriol trinitrate

Chemical Structure:



Molecular Formula:  $\text{C}_3\text{H}_5\text{N}_3\text{O}_9$

Molecular Weight: 227.09

Description: Nitroglycerin is an organic nitrate. It is a pale yellow oily liquid which is soluble in water, ethanol and methanol.

### Composition

Each sublingual tablet contains: nitroglycerin 0.3 or 0.6 mg. Non-medicinal ingredients: calcium stearate, glyceryl monostearate, lactose monohydrate, pregelatinized starch, silicon dioxide. Gluten-, paraben-, sodium-, sulfite- and tartrazine-free. Bottles of 100.

NITROSTAT is a stabilized sublingual compressed nitroglycerin tablet. This compressed tablet formulation is more stable and more uniform than conventional moulded tablets.

### Stability and Storage Recommendations

Store at controlled room temperature, 15-30°C.

### **AVAILABILITY OF DOSAGE FORMS**

NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets) are available as small, round, white sublingual tablets in amber glass bottles of 100. Each tablet contains 0.3 or 0.6 mg nitroglycerin. The 0.3 mg tablet is marked with “N” on one side and the number “3” on the other side. The 0.6 mg tablet is marked with “N” on one side and the number “6” on the other side.

## **INFORMATION FOR THE PATIENT**

The healthcare professional should communicate the following information to the patient.

This product is not intended for oral ingestion. It is intended for buccal or sublingual use only. If possible, patients should sit down when taking NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin tablets). This eliminates the possibility of falling due to lightheadedness or dizziness. There is a possibility of a headache (possibly severe) shortly after taking this medication. (See PRECAUTIONS.)

Nitroglycerin may cause dizziness, vertigo and syncope. Patients with marked sensitivity to the vasodilatory effects of nitroglycerin should avoid potentially hazardous task such as driving or operating machinery unless it is known that this medication does not affect their ability to engage in these activities.

Patients using NITROSTAT (nitroglycerin) must not take phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors such as sildenafil citrate (VIAGRA). Such a combination can produce severe lowering of blood pressure, loss of consciousness, heart attack or death.

Nitroglycerin may produce a burning or tingling sensation when administered sublingually; however the ability to produce a burning or tingling sensation should not be considered a reliable method for determining the potency of the tablets.

Nitroglycerin should be kept in the original glass container, tightly capped, at controlled room temperature between 15-30° C. The cotton should be discarded once the bottle is opened.

## TOXICOLOGY

**Carcinogenesis/Mutagenesis:** Animal carcinogenesis studies with sublingually administered nitroglycerin have not been performed.

Rats receiving up to 434 mg/kg/day of dietary nitroglycerin for 2 years developed dose-related fibrotic and neoplastic changes in liver, including carcinomas, and interstitial cell tumors in testes. At high dose, the incidences of hepatocellular carcinomas in males was 48% and in females was 33% compared to 0% in untreated controls. Incidences of testicular tumors were 52% vs 8% in controls. Lifetime dietary administration of up to 1058 mg/kg/day of nitroglycerin was not tumorigenic in mice.

Nitroglycerin was weakly mutagenic in Ames tests performed in 2 different laboratories. Nevertheless, there was no evidence of mutagenicity in an *in vivo* dominant lethal assay with male rats treated with doses up to about 363 mg/kg/day, PO, or in *ex vivo* cytogenetic tests in rat and dog tissues.

**Impairment of Fertility:** In a 3-generation reproduction study, rats received dietary nitroglycerin at doses up to about 434 mg/kg/day for 6 months prior to mating of the F<sub>0</sub> generation with treatment continuing through successive F<sub>1</sub> and F<sub>2</sub> generations. The high dose was associated with decreased feed intake and body weight gain in both sexes at all matings. No specific effect on the fertility of the F<sub>0</sub> generation was seen. Infertility noted in subsequent generations, however, was attributed to increased interstitial cell tissue and aspermatogenesis in the high-dose males. In this 3-generation study there was no clear evidence of teratogenicity.

Animal reproduction and teratogenicity studies have not been conducted with nitroglycerin sublingual tablets. Teratology studies in rats and rabbits, however, were conducted with topically applied nitroglycerin ointment at doses up to 80 mg/kg/day and 240 mg/kg/day, respectively. No toxic effects on dams or fetuses were seen at any dose tested.

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