



## Patient Drug Education for Nitroglycerin Ointment

Nitroglycerin ointment (NTG) is used to help heal anal fissures, promote wound healing, or treat external thrombosed hemorrhoids. The ointment relaxes the smooth muscle around the rectum and promotes blood flow to help the growth of new skin over the tear in the lining of the rectum. The NTG reduces anal canal pressure, which diminishes pain and spasm. We use a diluted concentration of NTG (.13%) compared to the 2% that is typically used for heart patients. It is only available at compounding pharmacies.

For fissures the NTG ointment should be applied two to three times a day usually for six weeks and then once a day for usually an additional six weeks. A pea size drop should be placed on the tip of your index finger and then the ointment is gently placed inside of the rectum. The finger should be inserted at least half its length and then swiped towards the fissure located posteriorly or anteriorly as it is removed. For an external thrombosis rub the NTG over the swollen area and then inside the rectum. The finger may be covered with a plastic glove or finger cot. You may use Vaseline to help coat the finger or dilute the ointment. If you are advised to mix the NTG with steroid ointment limit the steroids to one to two weeks in order to decrease the risk of infection.

It is important to continue the treatment for the entire time period. It takes up to two years to regain the normal skin strength associated with a fissure. Most thrombosis will resolve within two weeks. You will be advised to add fiber to your diet, use stool softeners, increase water to 7-8 glasses per day, use daily relaxing baths or sitz baths for 10-20 minutes, and to avoid prolonged sitting and straining on the commode. Local anesthetic ointment, xylocaine, lidocaine, or marcaine/ bupivacaine, may be added to the NTG.

In the beginning of treatment the anal fissure is very inflamed, which allows more of the NTG to get into the blood. This allows for a higher incidence of the most common side effect, a headache. It is usually mild but may require Tylenol or Advil. You may dilute the NTG further with Vaseline to decrease the headaches. As the treatment progresses and the fissure begins to heal the headaches will dissipate. If the headaches persist alternative prescription ointments are available. Other side effects include lightheadedness, flushing, dizziness, nervousness, nausea, and vomiting. If any of these side effects persist or worsen, notify us promptly. Stop using the NTG and notify us if you should develop the rare side effects of severe dizziness, fainting, fast/pounding

Provided by Hemorrhoid Centers of America™  
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NTG Ointment

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heartbeat, paleness, sweating, blurred vision, dry mouth, dark urine, bluish lips/skin/nails, unusual tiredness, severe weakness, irregular heartbeat, seizures, or chest pain. Serious allergic reactions are unusual, but seek immediate medical attention if you develop a rash, swelling, dizziness, or trouble breathing.

For external hemorrhoid thrombosis apply three times a day. Place a pea size amount on the bump and inside the rectum. Continue until the bump has resolved. For tag removal start the ointment on the day after the procedure. Gently apply the NTG on the outside and inside three times per day until the wound has healed.

Tell us if you are allergic to nitrates, have severe anemia, low blood pressure, dehydration, chronic heart failure, cardiomyopathy, recent heart attack, increased pressure in the brain, or exposure to nitrates while on the job. Do not use NTG while driving or working around machinery if you are drowsy, dizzy, have lightheadedness, or blurred vision. Limit alcoholic beverages. To minimize dizziness and lightheadedness, get up slowly when rising from a sitting or lying position. The elderly may be more prone to dizziness and falling. While there are not adequate studies to confirm the safety of NTG in pregnant or breast feeding women it has been used without incident so far. We recommend waiting at least one hour after applying the NTG ointment before breast feeding.

**Do not use NTG ointment if you are taking drugs for sexual problems (e.g., sildenafil, tadalafil, vardenafil).** Use caution before taking cough-and-cold products, diet aids, or NSAIDs preparations because they may contain ingredients that could increase your blood pressure, cause a fast heartbeat, or increase chest pain (e.g., pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine, chlorpheniramine, diphenhydramine, clemastine, ibuprofen, and naproxen). Tell us if you take alcohol, alteplase, migraine drugs (ergotamine), water pills/diuretics such as furosemide or hydrochlorothiazide, or other drugs for high blood pressure (beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, ACE inhibitors).

Store the NTG at room temperature and keep away from light and moisture. Close the container tightly after each use. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep away from children and pets.

If you have any questions or problems please call our office. Thank you and we hope you are better soon.