

Living With Angina: Your Chest Pain Plan

Medical-Surgical · Cardiovascular

Angina is chest discomfort from too little blood reaching your heart muscle. Follow this plan for your usual angina; new or different pain needs emergency help.

Stop and sit

- For your usual angina, stop activity and sit down.
- Place 1 prescribed nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue.
- Let it dissolve. Do not chew or swallow it. Note the time.

Know when to call 911

- **Call if pain is not relieved within 5 minutes after the first tablet.**
- Call sooner if pain worsens. Call immediately for new or different pain.
- Do not drive yourself.
- While waiting, repeat every 5 minutes if prescribed, up to 3 tablets total. Follow the dispatcher's instructions.

Keep tablets safe

- Keep them in the original dark glass bottle. Close it tightly.
- Keep away from heat and moisture. Do not use a pill organizer.
- Replace by the expiration date. Keep the bottle nearby.

Check medicine safety

- Headache and dizziness are common. Stay seated and stand slowly.
- **Never combine nitroglycerin with sildenafil, tadalafil, vardenafil, avanafil, or riociguat.**

- If you took one, do not take nitroglycerin for chest pain. Call 911 and tell the team what you took and when.

Protect your heart

- Stop smoking. Take your daily heart medicines.
- Follow your activity plan. Ask about cardiac rehab.

Call your provider today if you have

- A troublesome headache after chest pain has gone away
- Repeated mild dizziness without chest pain or fainting
- Questions about your medicines or need replacement tablets

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Pain not relieved within 5 minutes after the first tablet
- New, worsening, different, or resting chest pain
- Chest discomfort with cold sweat, nausea, trouble breathing, or pain in your arm, back, neck, or jaw
- Fainting or severe trouble breathing

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/angina-nitroglycerin/patient

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