

What is GTN?

Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN) is a drug which has been used in many areas of the body and has been found to be effective when used in several anal conditions. It works to relax muscle fibres in the body. It has been used for heart problems and high blood pressure as a tablet or spray. When used in the anus, it works by being directly absorbed into the muscles of the anus and acts to relax them. It is particularly helpful in conditions where the muscles in the anus are in spasm or are over-active.

How do I apply it?

The GTN comes as a paste. The active ingredient travels directly through the skin into the muscles of the anus. Since the muscles line the lower anal canal it is NOT necessary to put the ointment up inside the anus. It is best applied as a small pea sized 'blob' worked into the skin around the edge of the anus with your finger. It does not need to be spread right up between the buttocks.

When should I apply it?

For most conditions, the GTN should be used regularly. If not then you will be told how to apply it.

For painful conditions, such as fissures, it is best applied regularly three times a day. This is true even if the symptoms of the fissure are getting better since the healing process takes several weeks to complete and needs the regular effects of the GTN to happen.

If you have a fissure and you get pain between the regular applications of the ointment (particularly if it is painful after going to the loo), you can apply an extra dose as needed. When the fissure is particularly troublesome this may mean using the ointment 4, 5 or even 6 times a day.

Are there any side effects?

The commonest side effect from the GTN is a mild headache. These usually fade with use of the ointment. The headaches are due to the relaxation of the blood vessels of the head. You may also notice feeling warm or flushed for a similar reason. Very few people find the headaches bad. If you are prone to migraines or suffer uncomfortable headaches which don't settle down, stop using the ointment and make contact with us as you may need to consider another form of treatment.

Because GTN relaxes the muscles of the anus, occasionally a little mucus or fluid may escape from the anus during treatment. Only about 1 in 20 people experience this. Although it may be slightly embarrassing and might stain your underwear a little, it is a direct effect of the ointment and will go away again when the treatment finishes. If it is unmanageable, again, please get in contact and we can decide on another possible treatment plan.

Is it safe?

GTN ointment is safe for almost all patients including those with heart problems and angina as very little is absorbed to effect the circulation.

It is safe for pregnant women and in breast feeding.

How long does the ointment last?

The ointment will last for the length of your treatment but gradually the active ingredient gets weaker with time. After 4 months the ointment will be losing its potency and you may need a fresh tube if your treatment is continuing.



GTN
Treatment
Patient Information

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