Health Minute

The big bang...

What do Independence Day and the treatment of heart disease have in common? Nitroglycerin. Since its discovery more than 130 years ago, "nitro" has been a staple in the pockets of people with heart disease as those little pills you never want to use but keep around just in case. Nitro works by relaxing blood vessels and increasing the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart while reducing its workload. It is taken to relieve or to reduce the frequency of angina (chest pain) due to heart disease. If you have been diagnosed with coronary artery disease (plaque in the arteries to your heart), make sure you have a fresh supply with you at all times.



Taking Nitroglycerin

- As soon as you begin to feel an attack of angina start, sit down
- Put one tablet or one spray under your tongue
- ▼ Remain calm
- Nitro usually gives relief in 1 to 5 minutes – if you still have pain, use a second tablet or spray
- If your symptoms have not gone away after 2 tablets or sprays, take a third and call 9-1-1 for transportation to the nearest emergency department

Is your nitro fresh?

- Keep the medicine in its original bottle
- Put the cap on quickly and tightly after each use
- When you need to get a tablet out of the bottle, pour tablets into the bottle lid and not into your hand where they may pick up moisture
- ▼ Store in a cool dry place –
 keep in a purse or jacket
 pocket instead of your pants
 pocket. Do not store in the
 fridge or a bathroom.
- Replace your nitro when it reaches the expiration date