




Advisory 20-01 Phosphodiesterase Inhibitor (Erectile Dysfunction Medication) Contraindications in Nitroglycerin Protocols

To: All Providers

From: Jeremy T. Cushman, MD, MS, EMT-P, FACEP, FAEMS 
Regional Medical Director

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The Statewide BLS Protocol Update Training has caused great confusion amongst providers regarding the previous contraindication in the use of nitrates (Nitroglycerin) in the setting of recent Phosphodiesterase Inhibitor (Erectile Dysfunction) medications such as Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis.

The language in previous MLREMS protocols was as follows:

CAUTION

Avoid Nitroglycerin in patients who have taken erectile dysfunction medication (Viagra™, Levitra™, or Cialis™) in the past 48 hours

This language was removed in the 2017 Collaborative Protocols and remained out of the 2019 Collaborative Protocols. The reason for removal was that it is expected that providers understand the indications, contraindications, and incompatibilities of the medications they are giving and it did not need to be included in the protocol itself. For example, the protocols do not indicate avoid aspirin in patients with allergy or active GI bleeding – it is assumed based on the training of the provider that they understand the drug and who should and should not be receiving it for the given condition they are treating.

Unfortunately, the State's training indicated that "there is no need for concern" regarding the administration of nitrates in patients with recent Phosphodiesterase Inhibitor use. ***This is not accurate.*** Although the potential for profound drops in blood pressure exist, the frequency is low, but not zero, and is dependent on the time since the drug was taken and the drug itself. As a result, ***providers should continue to avoid Nitroglycerin in patients who have taken erectile dysfunction medication in the last 48 hours.*** As always, if there is a question, you may contact Medical Control for guidance.

I apologize for any confusion and with any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

web www.mlrems.org
phone (585) 463-2900
fax (585) 473-3516

office
44 Celebration Drive, Suite 2100
Rochester, NY 14620

mailing
601 Elmwood Avenue, Box 655-P
Rochester, NY 14642