

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### Pharmacology: CRUSHING PILLS CAN BE LETHAL

Did you know that crushing nitroglycerin pills could cause an explosion in your facility?

In fact, crushing tablets so patients can swallow them more easily is a potentially lethal practice in many ways, according to a report published in a British journal, the Nursing Standard.

Many pills are designed to release slowly over time and crushing can accelerate absorption, sometimes with serious consequences, according to researcher **David Wright**. Wright's research found that 80 percent of nursing home caregivers in the United Kingdom crushed pills at least weekly, with 58 percent claiming that the doctor recommended the practice. Your facility's safest practice: Develop a list of pills that can be safely crushed and, when in doubt, call the clinical pharmacist.