



Tobacco Cessation Medications

Who should consider using medication to quit?

If any or all of the following apply to you, medications may help you beat the tobacco habit:

- Have tried several times without success.
- Smoke 1 pack per day or more.
- Are bothered by cravings for nicotine.

Nicotine Gum (Nicorette® or Generic)

Over-the-counter medicine to replace nicotine in the body

- The gum may be mostly for those who smoke at irregular intervals, are concerned about weight gain after stopping smoking, and who want something that requires activity. The gum has also been a good strategy for those quitting dip or chew tobacco.
- The gum comes in 2-mg and 4-mg per piece doses. Use the 2-mg pieces unless you smoke over one pack per day.
- Taking at least 9 pieces per day for the first six weeks increases the chances of success, but do not use more than 24 pieces per day.
- Stop use of nicotine gum after 12 weeks. If the gum is still desired, contact physician.
- Read the directions carefully and learn the correct "chewing technique."
- Chew until a peppery taste is released, then "park" the gum in the side of your mouth. Intermittently chew and park the gum for 30 minutes.
- Don't eat or drink for 15 minutes before and during use of the gum, as it interferes with nicotine absorption.

- If you have heart problems, chronic medical problems or if you are pregnant or breast-feeding, check with your healthcare provider first before using the gum.
- Dispose of gum in wrapper and keep out of access by pets or children.

Nicotine Patch (Nicoderm CQ® or Generic)

Over-the-counter medicine to replace nicotine in the body

- Research shows the patch has a higher success rate than the gum.
- The patch comes in three strengths. If you smoke 10 cigarettes per day or more it is recommended that you start with the 21-mg patch for six weeks, then decrease to the 14-mg patch for two weeks, and finally to the 7-mg patch for two more weeks. If you smoke less than one pack per day, start with the 14-mg patch strength.
- Apply the patch to a dry, non-hairy area of skin on the upper arm, back or chest (above the level of the heart). Each morning, remove the old patch and apply a new patch. Rotate the site and do not go back to the same site for seven days. Do not apply more than one patch at a time.
- About 50% of patch users may develop some mild skin reactions like redness and itching. Wash with a cool rinse. Stop the patch and ask your healthcare practitioner if the skin reaction is severe. Don't use the patch if you are allergic to tape.
- If you have vivid dreams or sleep disruptions, try removing the patch at bedtime.
- Wash your hands after applying the patch and dispose of it properly. Nicotine is toxic to small children and animals. Do not cut the patches.
- Consult your healthcare provider if you have chronic medical problems, heart problems or are pregnant or breast-feeding, or have skin problems.
- Discontinue use after 8 to 10 weeks.

Nicotine Nasal Spray (Nicotrol NS®)

Over-the-counter medicine to replace nicotine in the body

- The nasal spray may be helpful because it doesn't just reduce the craving for nicotine; it actually mimics the pleasurable effects of nicotine.
- The spray often has significant side effects with initial use. It produces a peppery sensation in the nose and may cause tearing, sneezing and a burning sensation. Because it may cause watery eyes, do not plan to drive or operate heavy machinery immediately after use.
- Prime the bottle as directed. Spray once in each nostril. Do not inhale. Do not blow your nose for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Do not use the spray more than 5 times in an hour or 40 times in 24 hours.
- Do not use the spray for more than 3–6 months. Because nicotine is addictive, it is possible to become dependent on the nasal spray. It is important to only use it for as long as needed to overcome your tobacco habit.
- You should not use the spray if you have asthma, nasal allergies, nasal polyps or sinusitis.
- Consult your healthcare provider if you have medical problems, heart problems or are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- Dispose with child-resistant cap in place and out of access by pets or children.

Bupropion (Zyban® or Wellbutrin SR®)

Prescription medicine to decrease craving for nicotine

- Like Wellbutrin for depression, Zyban is thought to work on dopamine and norepinephrine receptors in the brain to decrease nicotine craving and withdrawal symptoms. Because of the way this medication works, it is important to start the pills 10 to 14 days before you plan to quit. So, plan ahead.
- Do not use if you are already on Wellbutrin for depression (because both Wellbutrin and Zyban contain the same medication.)
- Can be used alone or in conjunction with the nicotine patch if blood pressure is monitored.

- Side effects occasionally may include sleep disturbance, anxiety, decreased appetite or dry mouth.
- Do NOT take if you have a history of seizure disorder, bulimia, anorexia or if you used MAO inhibitor medications in the last 2 weeks. Do not use with any prescription drugs with seizure threshold lowering potential. Inform your healthcare provider of any medications you are currently taking.

Varenicline (Chantix®)

Prescription medicine to decrease craving for nicotine

- Blocks nicotine from attaching to nicotine receptors in the brain, which decreases cravings for cigarettes.
- Studies have shown that after 12 weeks of taking Chantix, 44% of study participants were able to stop smoking (vs 18% of patients who took placebo.)
- It requires a prescription but is currently not covered by all insurance companies. Ask your doctor for cost information before starting.
- Manufacturers offer a free "Get Quit"™ online support system and toll-free support hotline for people taking Chantix.
- Side effects occasionally may include nausea, trouble sleeping, constipation, gas, vomiting or changes in dreams. Do not take with other smoking cessation medicines.
- Consult your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, breast-feeding, or have a history of physical or mental illness.