

Tobacco Cessation Medications

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER USING MEDICATIONS TO QUIT?

Those who..... - have tried several times without success.

- smoke 1 pack per day or more.
- are bothered by cravings for nicotine.
- smoke within one half hour of waking in the morning.

If any or all of these apply to you, then these medications may help you beat the tobacco habit.

WHAT TYPES OF MEDICATIONS ARE THERE?:

1. *Nicotine Replacement Medications:* Start the gum, patch or nasal spray on your "quit day" to help decrease withdrawal cravings. *Never smoke while using these products!* It causes nicotine overdose.

2. *Zyban:* The new "smoking cessation pill" is designed to be started about two weeks *before* you quit. Zyban helps decrease cravings for nicotine before you quit and withdrawal symptoms after you quit.

Nicotine Gum - (Nicorette)

- The gum may be most for those who smoke at irregular intervals, who want to control when and how much nicotine used, 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 2mg and 4 mg per piece doses.
- Use the 2-mg pieces unless you smoke over one pack per day.
- If you use the 2mg pieces, chew no more than 30 pieces per day.
- If you use the 4-mg pieces, chew no more than 20 pieces per day.
- 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 consume acidic foods or beverages (fruit, coffee, soft drinks, etc.) for 15 minutes before and during use of the gum as it interferes with nicotine absorption.
- Some experts feel patients do not use enough gum and they advise chewing at least one piece every one to two hours instead of only chewing with a craving.
- If you have heart problems, chronic medical problems or if you are pregnant, check with your health care provider first before using the gum.

Nicotine Patch – (Nicoderm CQ)

- Research shows the patch has a higher success rate than the gum.
- The patch comes in three strengths. If you smoke 1 pack per day or more it is recommended that you start with the 21mg patch for 6 weeks, then taper to the 14mg for 2 weeks, and finally the 7mg patch for 2 more weeks. If you smoke less than 1 pack per day, start lower.
- Using the patch for the full 8-10 weeks results in higher success rates.
- Apply the patch to a dry, non-hairy area of skin. Each morning remove the old patch and apply a new patch. Rotate the site and do not go back to the same site for 7 days.
- About 50% of patch users may develop some mild skin reactions like redness and itching. Wash with a cool rinse & apply 1% hydrocortisone cream. Stop the patch and ask your health care 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. Cutting the patch can cause overdosing or under-dosing.
- Consult your healthcare provider first if you have chronic medical problems, heart problems or are pregnant.

Nicotine Nasal Spray – (Nicotrol NS)

- The nasal spray may be helpful because it doesn't just reduce the craving for nicotine. It actually mimics the pleasurable effects of nicotine.
- Unfortunately, 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. Regular use for one week decrease these side effects.
- 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 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.

Zyban (Bupropion HCl) 150 mg Sustained Release Tablets

- Zyban is thought to work on dopamine and norepinephrine receptors in the brain to decrease both 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.
- You take one tablet once a day for the first 3 days, then the dose is increased to one tablet twice a day for the next 7-14 days until your "quit date" reached. When you reach your quit day, you stop smoking but continue one Zyban pill twice a day for the next 7-12 weeks.
- Side effects occasionally may include: sleep disturbance, anxiety, decreased appetite or dry mouth.
- Do NOT take Zyban if you have a history of a seizure disorder, bulimia, anorexia or if you use medications called MAO inhibitors. Do not use Zyban with any prescription drugs which lower seizure potential. Inform your health care provider of any medications you are currently taking. Do not use with Wellbutrin (which is the same medication).
- Do not to take doses closer together than 8 hours. (Risk for seizure increases on doses of over 400mg).
- Zyban can be used alone or in conjunction with nicotine patch. This is an expensive alternative but it can be tried if using the patch or Zyban alone have failed. Blood pressure needs to be monitored if you do this.

HOW MUCH DO THEY COST? The patch and the gum can be purchased over the counter at most drug stores. Call around for prices as they cost varies depending on stores. Often coupons are available and will help cut cost. The Spray and Zyban are prescription medications. Check with you insurance company to see if they cover these medications.

For more information contact your health care provider.