

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Information for the Patient



Tobacco Plant
(*Nicotina tabacum*) -
source of
nicotine

Nicotine Patch (**Habitrol®**, **Nicoderm®**),
Nicotine Gum (**Nicorette®**, **Nicorette Plus®**,
Thrive®), Nicotine Inhaler (**Nicorette®**),
Nicotine Lozenge (**Nicorette®**, **Thrive®**)

Did You Know?

- The tobacco plant was originally grown in South and Central America.
- *Nicotina tabacum* is named after Jean Nicot, a French ambassador who in 1560 believed that nicotine could cure several diseases.
- Nicotine is a powerful insecticide.

What does Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) do?

NRT is used to help decrease the withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting smoking. NRT delivers a controlled amount of nicotine without the harmful chemicals present in cigarettes. The amount of nicotine can be gradually decreased over a number of weeks or months until it is no longer required.

Types of NRT:

There are four different nicotine replacement therapy options available in Canada and include:



- GUM
- LOZENGE
- INHALER
- PATCH



How does NRT work?


The nicotine in cigarettes enters the bloodstream via the lungs within 10 seconds. As nicotine levels quickly rise, the brain is stimulated. The smoker may experience pleasure, alertness and relaxation. Nicotine released from NRT replaces some of the nicotine your brain is used to; at a slower, less intense pace than cigarettes, allowing your body to adjust while you focus on quitting. The gum, lozenge and inhaler release nicotine faster than the patch, but slower than cigarettes, making them useful for cravings. The slower release of nicotine from NRT makes it much less addictive.




Your chance of successfully quitting smoking greatly improves if you combine quit methods like nicotine replacement therapy and supportive counseling.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?


Speak with your doctor or pharmacist about the following lifestyle changes:




Set a quit date - Choose a date and remove all smoking supplies from your home, car and workplace by the date chosen. If you are unsure about quitting completely, ask your pharmacist or doctor about the reduce-to-quit method.



Recognize your triggers – Many common activities or social events may trigger the urge to smoke. Some common triggers include drinking coffee or alcohol, work breaks, riding in the car, talking on the telephone, and/or second hand smoke. Plan ahead and strategize ways to avoid your own triggers such as distracting yourself with exercise, relaxation procedures or a low calorie snack .



Seek support - Most people benefit from joining a support group or counseling program while quitting smoking. If you're a BC resident, click www.quitnow.ca or call 1-877-455-2233 for FREE smoking cessation support and guidance from a registered nurse.



Have a reward system – Reward yourself for maintaining a smoke-free lifestyle to help sustain your motivation. One way is by collecting the money you would have spent on cigarettes each week in a jar and watching it accumulate or spending it on something special.

Directions for use:

NRT Patch (7mg, 14mg, 21mg)

- Releases a steady amount of nicotine through your skin throughout the day

How to use the Patch:

- Apply to clean, dry, hairless skin between neck and waist and rub for 20 seconds
- Change patch every 24 hours



NRT Inhaler (delivers up to 4mg)

- Nicotine vapor is absorbed through the lining of your mouth and throat (not your lungs)
- One inhaler puff does NOT equal one cigarette puff
- Duration varies: up to 20 minutes per cartridge

How to use the Inhaler:

- Once assembled, place tapered end in mouth
- Inhale deeply into back of your throat OR take short puffs

NRT Gum & Lozenge

- Duration: ~30 minutes
- Nicotine is absorbed through the lining of your mouth and cheeks

How to use the Gum:

- **2mg, 4mg**
- Bite, Park, Bite
- **Bite into gum** slowly until a peppery taste is released, “**park**” it between cheek and gum (~1 min); repeat

How to use the Lozenge:

- **1mg, 2mg, 4mg**
- Place in mouth & **suck lozenge** until a strong taste is released, “**rest**” it between your cheek and gum (~1 min); repeat

MYTHS ABOUT NRT

FICTION: Nicotine causes cancer and heart disease.

FACT: Arsenic, carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde, tar and other toxic chemicals in tobacco cause cancer and harmful effects, NOT the nicotine.

FICTION: You can't smoke while using NRT.

FACT: NRT can be used to replace some cigarettes if you are wanting to cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke but aren't ready to quit yet. This is much safer than using high numbers of cigarettes.



FICTION: You can't combine NRT's.

FACT: The patch releases a steady dose of nicotine all day to prevent cravings and symptoms of withdrawal. The gum, lozenge & inhaler have a fast onset (~15 minutes) and can be used regularly (i.e. every 2 hours) or as needed for cravings. If the patch does not provide satisfactory relief of your cravings, you may combine the patch with the gum, lozenge or inhaler as needed and/or adjust the strength of your patch. Gradually, you may reduce the use of the 'as needed' NRT.

FICTION: You can't use NRT longer than 12 weeks.

FACT: It is safer to use NRT longer than 12 weeks (if needed) as opposed to reverting back to smoking again. The NRT daily dose should be reduced when YOU are ready.

SIDE EFFECTS

Nicotine Patch may cause:



- Itching, redness and/or burning around application site
- ➔ **Rotate sites to avoid skin irritation or change brands if bothersome**
- Vivid dreams
- Difficult sleeping

➔ **If you experience difficulty sleeping or vivid dreams, remove the patch at bedtime and reapply a new one in the morning. You may need to use the NRT gum, lozenge, or inhaler for cravings during the night.**

Nicotine Inhaler may cause:

- Throat irritation
- Cough
- Runny nose



Nicotine Gum and Lozenge may cause:



- Mouth soreness
- Jaw ache (with gum)
- Hiccups

If any of these side effects occur and do not disappear with continued use or become unbearable, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

➔ **If the following symptoms occur, you may be receiving too much nicotine and should decrease your daily nicotine dose and/or contact your doctor or pharmacist:**



- Nausea, vomiting
- Headache
- Difficulty sleeping
- Confusion
- Sweats, tremors
- Racing heartbeat
- Light headedness
- Weakness



If you smoke >1 pack of cigarettes/day, you may require more than the manufactures recommended NRT dose. Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Avoid using the gum if you have dentures or temporomandibular disease.

Do not chew or swallow the lozenge.

DRUG INTERACTIONS



Speak to your Pharmacist about the effects of quitting smoking on your other medications. The following medications may be cleared differently from your body once you stop smoking:

- ⇒ Antidepressants
- ⇒ Antipsychotics (clozapine, olanzapine)
- ⇒ Benzodiazepines (chlordiazepoxide, diazepam)
- ⇒ Caffeine
- ⇒ Nifedipine
- ⇒ Propafenone
- ⇒ Theophylline
- ⇒ Verapamil
- ⇒ Warfarin



Avoid drinking acidic beverages such as coffee, juices and soft drinks within 15 minutes of using a NRT gum, lozenge, or inhaler as this may decrease the absorption.



Topics to Discuss with your Doctor or Pharmacist



- ⇒ How and when to take the medicine
- ⇒ How to know if the medication is working
- ⇒ How long will it take to work
- ⇒ How long will it have to be taken
- ⇒ What to do about missed doses
- ⇒ Are lab tests needed while on this medicine

Want more Information?
Visit one of these Web Sites

www.quitnow.ca
www.bc.lung.ca
www.smoke-free.ca
www.clinicalprevention.ca
www.quit4life.com

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