

A Quick Reference to Quit Tobacco Medications

Varenicline (brand name Chantix). Intended to reduce the pleasure of nicotine use by blocking the rewarding effects of nicotine and reducing some of the withdrawal symptoms.

Bupropion (brand names Zyban or Wellbutrin, now also available generically). Designed to help reduce nicotine cravings; can also relieve symptoms of depression in some people.

Nicotine gum (available over-the-counter [OTC]). Recommended for people who want something to turn to when experiencing urges to use tobacco. It releases nicotine into the mouth to relieve cravings. Individuals can chew 20–30 pieces per day for 6–8 weeks.

Nicotine inhaler (available by prescription). Nicotine is released into the body when individuals “puff” small doses through this product, which looks similar to a cigarette. Unlike cigarettes, there is no harmful carbon monoxide. Treatment with an inhaler usually lasts 8–12 weeks.

Nicotine nasal spray (available by prescription). This product allows you to spray nicotine into the nose. Recommended use is up to 2 sprays an hour for as many as 3 months.

Nicotine patch (available by prescription or OTC). Patches are designed to provide a steady stream of nicotine throughout the skin over a designated time (usually 16–24 hours depending on the product). The patch is designed to give you enough nicotine to ease cravings but not enough to be addictive. Treatment using the patch is usually 6–8 weeks.

Nicotine lozenges (available OTC). The nicotine lozenges, like nicotine gums, release nicotine into the mouth. If you have your first tobacco of the day within 30 minutes of awaking, the 4 mg dose is recommended; otherwise, the 2 mg dose is recommended. Individuals can use 6–12 lozenges per day. Treatment usually lasts 8–12 weeks.



Note: All of these products can have side effects. Seeing your health care provider is important for determining appropriate dosages and duration or use for your individual needs.^{1,2}

Sources:

1. University of Wisconsin Medical School: Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention (2008). FDA-approved medications to help patients quit smoking. Retrieved September 24, 2008. From http://www.ctri.wisc.edu/Smokers/smokers_FDA_Approved.Medications.htm.
2. Michigan Surgeon General (2008). Nicotine replacement [on-line]. Retrieved September 23, 2008. From http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral/0,1607,7-216-33084_33091_33416---,00.html