

# Which medications should I use?

**You and your doctor will need to discuss which medication or medications will be best for you when you try to stop smoking. In this chapter we will review the 7 types of medications available so you can decide which is best for you.**

## Nicotine Patch, Nicotine Gum and Nicotine Lozenge

Nicotine patch, nicotine gum and nicotine lozenge are all over-the-counter medications. Over-the-counter medications do not require a doctor's prescription, although it is recommended that you still discuss the decision to use these medications with your doctor. Smokers who are pregnant or have heart disease should consult with their doctor before using nicotine medications. Nicotine patch, nicotine gum and nicotine lozenge cost about \$35-55 for a 2-week supply of medication. Nicotine medication is started on the day that you try to stop smoking, also called the "Quit Date". Never use nicotine medications if you plan to continue to smoke or use another tobacco product. The combined dose of nicotine could be dangerous to your health.

### Nicotine Patch

Nicotine patches provide nicotine to your body through the skin. Nicotine patches give nicotine continuously through the day and are easy to use. They can be worn for 24 hours or removed at night when you sleep. Usually the patch is worn for about 12 weeks and the nicotine dose is lowered during this time. Several types and

different strengths are available. Instructions are included in the package that describes how to use the product and include possible side effects.

## Nicotine Gum

Nicotine gum provides nicotine to the body through the lining of the mouth. It works best if a piece of gum is chewed about every hour but more can be used when you have urges or cravings to smoke. Nicotine gum is a medication and is not used like regular chewing gum. It has a peppery taste and must be chewed slowly off and on for about 20 to 30 minutes. **Don't drink coffee, soda or other beverages for at least 15 minutes before and during gum use.**

## Nicotine Lozenge

Nicotine lozenge is a hard tablet that also provides nicotine to the body through the lining of the mouth. You suck on the lozenge until it dissolves and **do not bite or chew it** like a hard candy. The recommended dose for the lozenge:

Week 1 through 6: one lozenge every 1-2 hours

Weeks 7 through 9: one lozenge every 2-4 hours

Weeks 10 through 12: one lozenge every 4-8 hours

**Like the gum you should not drink coffee, soda or other beverages with the lozenge.**

## Nicotine Inhaler

Nicotine inhaler and nicotine nasal spray both require a doctor's prescription. As with the other nicotine medications, these are also started on the Quit Date.

Nicotine inhaler is a plastic tube with a nicotine cartridge inside. When you puff on the inhaler, a nicotine vapor goes into the mouth. It does not need to be inhaled since the nicotine goes only into the mouth and not into the lungs. Breathing or puffing on it too deeply will make you cough more. Holding the nicotine inhaler in your hand and puffing on it can seem like the closest thing to smoking a cigarette, which some smokers find helpful.

## Nicotine Nasal Spray

Nicotine nasal spray delivers nicotine quickly and is absorbed through the nose. The nasal spray immediately relieves withdrawal symptoms and offers you a sense of control over nicotine cravings. Because it is easy to use and can deliver a bigger immediate dose of nicotine, smokers report great satisfaction with it. In the beginning, it has the most side effects and can cause sneezing, watery eyes and coughing although these usually stop if you keep using it.

## Bupropion

Bupropion is a smoking treatment that does not contain nicotine. Bupropion can be used alone or in combination with nicotine medications to improve your chances of quitting. It is usually a personal choice to use bupropion. Some people are unable to take nicotine or prefer to take a pill medication to help them quit smoking. Bupropion can only be taken with a doctor's prescription. It is usually started two weeks before the Quit date. It is recommended that you continue taking bupropion for 3-6 months after you quit smoking.

Bupropion is EXACTLY the SAME medication as Wellbutrin SR or Zyban. Bupropion is also a good treatment for major depression. This medication should not be taken if you have a history of seizures, bulimia (binge and purge eating disorder), or head trauma.

## *Varenicline (Chantix)*

Varenicline is a smoking treatment that does not contain nicotine and some studies have shown it is the most effective treatment currently available to help people stop smoking. Varenicline tricks your brain into thinking it is still getting nicotine which helps take away nicotine withdrawal. It also blocks the pleasure associated with smoking. Varenicline is not used in combination with nicotine medications. Varenicline can only be taken with a doctor's prescription. It is usually started one week before the Quit date. It is recommended that you continue taking varenicline for 3-6 months after you quit smoking.

This medication should not be taken if you have a serious kidney disease. Some people get nausea when they take varenicline but this will be less if you take the medication with food.

**There are 7 medications that are available to help you stop smoking. (Check all the ones you would like to try)**

- Nicotine gum
- Nicotine patch
- Nicotine lozenge
- Nicotine inhaler
- Nicotine nasal spray
- Bupropion (pill)
- Varenicline (pill)



**Did you discuss these medications with your doctor or nurse?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Which one do you think would be best for you?**

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**Which medications require a doctor's prescription?**

Nicotine gum

Nicotine nasal spray

Nicotine patch

Bupropion (pill)

Nicotine lozenge

Varenicline (pill)

Nicotine inhaler



**Which medications contain nicotine?**

Nicotine gum

Nicotine nasal spray

Nicotine patch

Bupropion (pill)

Nicotine lozenge

Varenicline (pill)

Nicotine inhaler