



NRT Fact Sheet

Using tobacco involves both a **physical addiction** to nicotine and a **behavioral habit** in your daily routine. For these reasons, quitting can be challenging. Some options for over-the-counter and prescription medications are available to help you beat these challenges.

The ITRC recommends that you consult with your physician to learn more about each of the following options and to decide if one of them is right for you.

Common Cessation Methods

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

- Nicotine transdermal patch (OTC)
- Nicotine gum (OTC)
- Nicotine lozenge (OTC)
- Nicotine nasal spray (Rx only)
- Nicotine inhaler (Rx only)

Non-Nicotine Medications (Rx only)

- Bupropion (Zyban[®] or Wellbutrin[®])
- Varenicline (Chantix[®])

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Nicotine Patch

The nicotine patch is available over-the-counter without a prescription. The patch is put on the skin and delivers a steady dose of nicotine through the skin. It works to reduce distracting nicotine cravings and help you focus on changing your daily routines.

Side effects may include some change in sleep patterns and redness where the patch is applied. You should not continue smoking while using the patch.

Nicotine Gum

Nicotine gum is available over-the-counter without a prescription. The gum is designed to slowly release nicotine into the mouth when chewed and placed between cheek and gum. Like the patch, nicotine gum works to reduce cravings and help you focus on changing your daily routines. Typical use requires one piece every one to eight hours, with some individuals requiring more.

Side effects may include irritation of the lining of the mouth. You should not continue smoking while using the gum.

Nicotine Lozenge

The Commit nicotine lozenge is available over-the-counter. It is a slow release lozenge containing nicotine. By following the product dosage instructions, you will eventually wean yourself from nicotine by lowering the strength and number of lozenges over a twelve-week period. You should not continue using tobacco while using the lozenge.

Lozenges come in varied strengths. Choice of the appropriate lozenge depends upon how quickly you use tobacco after waking.

Nicotine Inhaler

The nicotine inhaler is available by prescription only. The inhaler is a thin plastic cartridge containing a porous nicotine plug.



When you puff on the cartridge, a nicotine vapor is extracted and absorbed through the lining of the mouth. Each cartridge delivers up to 400 puffs of vapor. It takes at least 80 puffs to obtain the amount of nicotine delivered by one cigarette.

Side effects from use of the inhaler may include irritation of the lining of the mouth, coughing, runny nose or upset stomach. Some people prefer the inhaler because the way it is used is similar to cigarette smoking. You should not continue smoking while using the inhaler.

Nicotine Nasal Spray

Nicotine nasal spray is available by prescription only. The spray is aerosolized nicotine contained in a spray pump. When this substance is sprayed into the nostrils, the nasal membranes inside the nose rapidly absorb the nicotine. Due to this rapid absorption, the effect of the nicotine is felt more quickly than with other nicotine replacement therapies. For the same reason, nicotine nasal spray has a higher dependency potential than the patch or gum.

Side effects may include nose and throat irritation, watering eyes, sneezing and coughing. You should not continue smoking while using the spray.

Non-Nicotine Medications

Bupropion (Zyban/Wellbutrin)

Bupropion is the generic name for the drugs Zyban and Wellbutrin. This is a prescription medication originally developed to treat depression that can also assist individuals who are trying to quit tobacco use.

Research evidence indicates that it helps to alleviate some withdrawal symptoms associated with stopping tobacco use. You must begin taking Bupropion a week or two before quitting tobacco use, as this allows the medicine time to saturate your system.

In addition, if you have not been successful using nicotine replacement therapy, Bupropion may provide the assistance you need.

Side effects may include insomnia and dry mouth. Bupropion should not be used if you suffer from certain medical conditions, including seizures, eating disorders and current use of certain other medications. If you use Bupropion in your stop smoking efforts, your physician should monitor your health regularly.

Chantix

This is a prescription medication designed specifically to assist individuals who are trying to stop their tobacco use.

Like Bupropion, it helps to ease the physical withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting. Chantix adjusts your brain chemistry so nicotine no longer has the pleasurable effect it did before, decreasing your desire to use tobacco. You begin taking Chantix approximately one week prior to quitting, so the medicine may adequately saturate your system.

Side effects may include nausea, intestinal upset, insomnia and headaches. If you use Chantix in your stop smoking efforts, we advise seeing your physician for regular health monitoring.