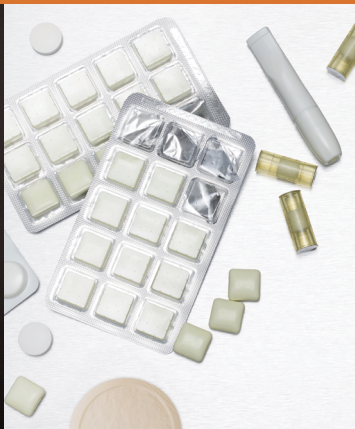


# How to Use Tobacco Treatment Medications

## A Pocket Guide



**There are seven tobacco treatment medications, including two non-nicotine pills, bupropion SR (Zyban or Wellbutrin) and varenicline (Chantix), and five types of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) — the patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler and nasal spray.**

**Whether your goal is to manage nicotine cravings, cut down or quit, you can safely use NRT, even if you continue to use tobacco products at the same time. NRT is also safe to use in combination with other medications. This pocket guide includes instructions for how to use all five forms of NRT, and some pros, cons and tips for using all seven tobacco treatment medications.**

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# 1. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

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## Patch

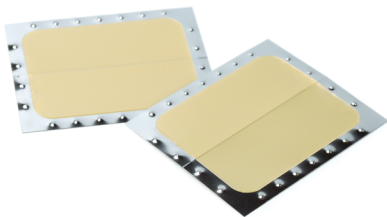
### Instructions

- Remove the patch from its package and peel it from the protective film. Avoid touching the sticky side (that's where the nicotine is).
- Place the patch sticky side down on an area of the skin that is clean, dry and hairless, above the waist and below the neck (for example, your upper arm, upper back or front of shoulder, but not your armpit). Avoid any skin that might be cut or irritated. Flatten and smooth the patch to make sure it sticks.
- Be sure to wash your hands after handling the patch to avoid transferring nicotine from your fingers to your eyes or nose.
- Change the patch every 24 hours. Place each new patch on a new area of skin to avoid irritation.
- When discarding the patch, fold the sticky sides together and place it in the trash away from pets and children.

### Additional Guidance

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- If you experience side effects, such as vivid dreams or difficulty sleeping, you can try removing the patch one to two hours before you go to sleep. Always talk to your health care provider about side effects.
- If you smoke 10 or less cigarettes per day, start with the 14 milligrams (mg) patch. If you smoke 11 or more cigarettes per day, start with the 21 mg patch.



## Pros

- Comes in 21, 14, or 7 mg to match the amount of nicotine you would otherwise get from smoking.
- Delivers a steady dose of nicotine over 24 hours that helps reduce any urge to smoke.
- Safe to use together with other short-acting forms of NRT (lozenge, spray, gum or inhaler) to counteract any breakthrough urges to smoke.
- Easy to switch to a lower dose patch if you want to try to taper nicotine use.

## Cons

- Wearing the patch overnight can give some people vivid dreams or sleep disturbances.



# 1. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

## Gum

### Instructions

- Avoid eating or drinking up to 15 minutes before using the gum and while using it.
- Remove a piece of gum from the package and place it in your mouth.
- It's important that you don't chew it like regular gum! Start by chewing the piece gently until it softens. You will be able to detect a slight tingling or peppery taste or sensation. Then keep (or "park") the nicotine gum between your cheek and gums and let it stay there until the tingling has faded after a few minutes.
- Chew the gum until you detect the tingling again (chewing releases the nicotine), and then "park" it in a new place between your cheek and gums until the tingling fades again.
- Repeat this process for about 30 minutes until you have chewed and released all the nicotine in the gum and can no longer taste the flavor or detect the tingling.

### Additional Guidance

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- Chewing nicotine gum the way you would regular gum may result in the nicotine ending up in your stomach instead of being absorbed into your system to manage withdrawal. Use the chew and "park" method to maximize its effectiveness.
- If you usually smoke your first cigarette later in the day, try the 2 mg gum. If you usually smoke your first cigarette of the day within 30 minutes of waking up, try the 4 mg gum.



## Pros

- Provides a quick dose of nicotine in either 2 or 4 mg that can help control any craving to use tobacco.
- Light chewing and “parking” in between your gum and cheek allows a subtle dose of nicotine in any situation.
- New flavors, like mint, spearmint, cinnamon and fruit.
- Available without prescription.

## Cons

- Cannot chew like regular gum, and swallowing the gum or a large amount of saliva can result in nausea or hiccups.
- Might stick to dental work.

# 1. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

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## Lozenge

### Instructions

- Avoid eating or drinking up to 15 minutes before using the lozenge, and while using it.
- Remove the lozenge from the package and place it in your mouth.
- Allow it to dissolve slowly the way you would a cough drop or hard candy. Do not bite or chew the lozenge.

### Additional Guidance

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- Chewing and swallowing the nicotine lozenge may result in the nicotine ending up in your stomach instead of being absorbed into your system.
- If you usually smoke your first cigarette later in the day, try the 2 mg lozenge. If you usually smoke your first cigarette of the day within 30 minutes of waking up, try the 4 mg lozenge.





## Pros

- Provides a quick dose of nicotine in either 2 or 4 mg that can help control any urges to use tobacco.
- Easy and discreet to use in any situation.
- Can use with dental work.
- New flavors, like mint, spearmint, cinnamon and fruit.
- Available without a prescription.

## Cons

- Side effects might include nausea or hiccupping, especially if you chew it or swallow large pieces.

# 1. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

## Inhaler

### Instructions

- Separate the mouthpiece and inhaler by aligning the marks and pulling them apart.
- Remove a nicotine cartridge from the box and place it in the inhaler. Push the cartridge into the inhaler until it breaks the foil with a small pop.
- Line up the marks on the inhaler and the mouthpiece and push them together until secured.
- Draw on the inhaler using small breaths or puffs until you feel the tingle of nicotine in your mouth and throat. Inhale just enough to bring the nicotine into your mouth, but do not inhale all the way into your lungs.
- Puffing on the inhaler for about 20 minutes will use up one cartridge.

### Additional Guidance

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- Discard the used cartridges. Do not try to reuse them.
- Wash the mouthpiece regularly with soap and water.



## Pros

- The hand-to-mouth motion is familiar for those who smoke.
- Take as many or as few puffs as needed to control any urges for tobacco.

## Cons

- Only available with a prescription from your health care provider.
- May cause some mouth or throat irritation.

# 1. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

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## Nasal Spray

### Instructions

- Remove the cap.
- Prepare the spray by pressing the pump a few times before using to ensure the pump and spray are working.
- Insert the tip of the nozzle comfortably in one nostril, pointing it toward the back of your nasal passages. Firmly press the pump as you inhale through your nose.
- Switch nostrils and repeat the process.

### Additional Guidance

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- Use the spray when you have the urge to smoke.



## Pros

- Nasal spray works faster than nicotine gum, lozenges or inhalers to help with cravings.

## Cons

- Only available with a prescription from your health care provider.
- May cause watery eyes or some sinus or throat irritation.

## 2. Non-Nicotine Medications

### Varenicline or Chantix

#### Instructions

- Take the pill with food and water as directed by your health care provider.

#### Additional Guidance

- Take for up to 12 weeks, and then consult your health care provider for guidance on further use.

#### Pros

- Specifically designed to treat nicotine dependence.
- Works well for many people without having to take multiple medications.
- Different dosing options are available, including one where you slowly reduce the amount you smoke over time, while taking the medicine.

#### Cons

- Using NRT is not usually recommended while taking Chantix, since they may not work well together.
- Only available with a prescription from your health care provider.

## 2. Non-Nicotine Medications

### Bupropion SR or Zyban/Wellbutrin

#### Instructions

- Take with food and as directed by your health care provider.

#### Additional Guidance

- Take pills as early in the day as possible to avoid insomnia.

#### Pros

- Can be used with any form of NRT.
- May be particularly helpful for people who have depression.

#### Cons

- Only available with a prescription from your health care provider.
- May cause insomnia.

### 3. Common Questions

#### Can I use more than one kind of NRT at the same time?

Yes. In fact, it can be helpful to use short-acting NRT (gum or inhaler) for immediate cravings with long-acting NRT (patch), which delivers a steady dose of nicotine over 24 hours.

#### Can I use NRT even if I'm still using tobacco?

Yes. There are no significant safety concerns associated with using NRT with other nicotine-containing products, like cigarettes.

#### Can I become addicted to NRT?

There is some potential to become dependent on short-acting forms of NRT, but this is very low risk because the nicotine is delivered at a slower rate than smoking. NRT also **does not** contain all the harmful and cancer-causing chemicals that are released while smoking.



## **Are there any medications I can take that do not contain nicotine?**

Yes. Chantix and Zyban are two medications used to address tobacco use that do not contain nicotine and have been shown to be very effective.

## **I still crave tobacco or cigarettes even though I am using NRT. Am I using NRT correctly?**

If you are using NRT as directed and still craving nicotine, talk to your health care provider about increasing your dose or using more than one form of NRT to manage nicotine withdrawal.

Occasionally, people report that they “miss” activities often associated with using tobacco, such as drinking coffee. Instead, take a few minutes to relax, socialize with friends or develop a new routine for those situations. Talk to your health care provider about how counseling can help you get the support and encouragement you need to stay on track and meet your tobacco-use goals.

## How do I know if I am getting too much or too little nicotine?

If you are getting too much nicotine, you may have a fast heartbeat, headache, upset stomach or feel dizzy or nauseated. If you have these symptoms, stop or decrease how much NRT you are using and talk to your health care provider. Adjusting the medication can usually resolve these symptoms.

If you are getting too little nicotine, you may feel anxious, irritable, have difficulty concentrating, experience insomnia, feel strong cravings for nicotine or have increased appetite. Talk to your health care provider about increasing your dose.

## Are e-cigarettes a type of NRT?

No. E-cigarettes are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to help people quit smoking. The FDA does not closely monitor or test e-cigarette ingredients as it does with medications. So, chemicals in e-liquids, including nicotine content, can differ greatly. We do not know the long-term effects of using e-cigarettes, but we do know they can release harmful chemicals during use.

For more information on how to access  
tobacco treatment and support, visit

**[nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health)**

and search for

**Be Free With NRT.**

