

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) helps to relieve some of the withdrawal symptoms that many people experience when they try to quit smoking. Four NRT products are currently available in Australia. These nicotine substitutes help to treat the difficult withdrawal symptoms and cravings which can make it difficult to quit. Discuss NRT options with your pharmacist and remember NRT can double your chance of quitting successfully.

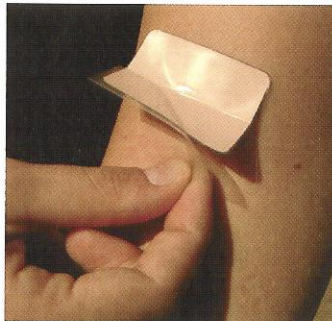
Quitting

Although the nicotine in tobacco is addictive and makes you want to smoke, it is not the nicotine but the other chemicals in tobacco smoke that cause cancer, heart disease, bronchitis and the other smoking-related health problems.

When you quit smoking, your body can still have a 'need' for nicotine which creates an urge to want to smoke again. You may suffer withdrawal effects such as irritability, loss of concentration, and sleepless nights. By taking nicotine in a 'clean form' through patches, chewing gum, lozenges or inhaler, the physical withdrawal symptoms are reduced, allowing you to focus your energies on breaking the habits of smoking.

Important

- Do not smoke whilst using NRT
- If you are pregnant or if you have recent or severe heart or circulatory diseases, you should not use NRT – talk to a doctor or pharmacist about the best way for you to quit.



By taking NRT you are twice as likely to be successful in staying quit. However, NRT does not completely remove the desire to smoke, willpower is still needed and this is where support and advice together with NRT can help you quit permanently.

NRT – which products?

Nicotine patch – releases a steady amount of nicotine in the body to help prevent cravings. The patches are similar to adhesive band aids and are available in clear and opaque patches.

Nicotine gum – contains enough nicotine to reduce some of the urge to smoke.

Nicotine inhaler – consists of a plastic cylinder containing a cartridge that delivers nicotine when you puff on it. Although similar in appearance to a cigarette, the inhaler delivers nicotine into the mouth, not the lung, and enters the body much more slowly than the nicotine in cigarettes.

Nicotine Lozenge – this newest NRT product is useful for people who prefer a medicine to be used in the mouth, but who may not like the gum.

Advantages of NRT

- Less nicotine is obtained than in cigarettes.
- NRT products do not contain all the tars and poisonous gases that are found in cigarettes.
- Using NRT helps take the edge off cigarette cravings and lessens chances of suffering from several of the major smoking withdrawal symptoms such as tenseness, irritability, drowsiness and lack of concentration.
- As long as you do not smoke, side effects of NRT are usually mild. Some people experience skin rashes (for patches), sore mouth and throat (for gum, lozenge and inhaler), nausea, dizziness or vivid dreams.
- NRT is usually taken for 2-3 months after quitting. It does not have the same addictive potential as smoking, and few quitters feel the need to continue treatment for longer than this.

Bupropion hydrochloride (Zyban)

A non-nicotine medicine – bupropion hydrochloride (*Zyban*) can be prescribed by a doctor as a short-term treatment to help the patient stop smoking. Bupropion has been shown to help smokers quit by altering levels of certain natural chemicals in the brain called adrenaline and noradrenaline, and this can help reduce nicotine cravings. For more information, talk to a doctor or pharmacist.

Self Care

- You do not have to go 'cold turkey' to quit smoking. NRT can assist you to quit.
- Read the *Smoking* and *Staying a Non-smoker* fact cards for useful tips on quitting and staying quit.

Your Self Care Pharmacist

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Pharmacy Self Care has a strong commitment to providing current and reliable health information.
The information in this card was current at time of printing.

- Once you decide to quit, your success rate might improve if you follow simple lifestyle changes such as avoiding other smokers; avoiding stressful, sad or frustrating situations or arguments. Try avoiding alcohol and caffeine and other factors you associate with cigarettes or tobacco products.
- Stopping smoking involves more than overcoming the physical addiction to smoking. If you are having a difficult time staying quit, you may benefit from a special smoking cessation support group. There is a link between the amount of support you get when quitting and staying quit. Support kits and programs are available with some NRT products give you even more help to quit.
- Millions of people have stopped smoking. When you do make up your mind to quit - you can do it. It is never too late to stop. The key is to develop positive attitudes: *'This is important to me' ... 'I want to be an ex-smoker' ... 'I can do this - I can quit'.*
- Talk to a pharmacist to see if NRT is suitable for you. Remember to tell them if you are taking any other medicines or have other conditions, such as heart disease.

Do not give up on your plan to quit – you can succeed

Other fact cards of interest

- *Smoking*
- *Staying a Non-smoker*

Contact

A doctor – listed under 'medical practitioners' in the yellow pages of the phone book

A state Quit office. Phone Quitline: 131 848

A Self Care pharmacist. To find: (02) 6283 4777

In case of poisoning, phone the **Poisons Information Centre** on 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacists are medicines experts. Ask your pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

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