

## Medications and Nicotine Replacement

To medicate or not to medicate, that is the question. Is it easier to kick the habit with a little help from pharmaceuticals or should a smoker simply try to tough it out on their own first?

It really is a personal decision. And even though some medications are available without a prescription, the decision should really be made with the help of a health care professional who can help determine which medication is best.

The following is a list of medications along with some info on each.

### Medications

#### Bupropion

- Bupropion hydrochloride, or Zyban, is a pill that is available only with a prescription.
- Bupropion does not contain nicotine but helps to decrease nicotine cravings and withdrawal symptoms by stimulating the chemicals in the brain affected by nicotine.
- Smokers can use bupropion in conjunction with nicotine replacement, if recommended by a doctor.

#### Varenicline

- Varenicline is a prescription-only pill known by the common name Chantix.
- Varenicline does not contain nicotine and helps to block nicotine uptake in the brain, thus decreasing the "need" for the chemical.
- There have been some reports of psychological side effects.

### Nicotine Replacements

The following approved medications are considered Nicotine Replacements. With these types of medications, it is important to stop smoking as soon as one starts and not smoke while using them. They work by delivering doses of nicotine to help ease cravings smokers may feel when they quit. The amount of nicotine delivered is then gradually reduced (by dose or frequency) until the cravings taper off.

#### Nicotine Inhaler or Puffer

- Known as Nicotrol, the inhaler is available only with a prescription and gives the user a dose of nicotine that is absorbed through the lining of the mouth. Hollow and about the size of a cigarette, the inhaler is filled with a nicotine cartridge.
- The inhaler may help with the physical craving for nicotine and the psychological need to have something in one's hand or mouth.
- Each "puff" on the inhaler delivers one dose - it can take around 80 "puffs" to get the amount of nicotine that is in one cigarette. The inhaler may need to be used frequently, about 6 cartridges a day, particularly at the beginning of the quitting process.

### **Nicotine Spray**

- Known as Nicotrol NS, nicotine spray is available only with a prescription and delivers nicotine through the nasal membranes of the nose.
- This method of nicotine delivery is quicker than that experienced with the nicotine gum or inhaler.
- A single spray into each nostril will deliver one dose and dosages can vary from 8-40 a day.

### **Nicotine Patch**

- There are two types of nicotine patches. Habitrol or Prostep require a prescription and Nicotrol and Nicoderm CQ do not.
- Nicotine is delivered in a steady amount throughout the day through the skin and therefore is slower in its release than other medications. The patch is available in 16-hour and 24-hour increments.
- The patch is used by applying it to a different part of the upper body every day. Length of usage varies by person and can continue from 4 weeks to 3 months.

### **Nicotine Gum**

- Nicotine gum or Nicorette is available without a prescription and is absorbed through the lining of the mouth.
- The user should chew the gum briefly, and then place it between the inside of the cheek and the gum line.
- The user should make sure not to continue to chew it and swallow the saliva, since the stomach cannot absorb the nicotine and may result in a nauseated feeling. They should stop chewing when they have a peppery taste or feel a slight tingling sensation in the mouth.
- One cannot drink, eat or chew anything else 15 minutes before use of the gum or while it is in the mouth.

### **Nicotine Lozenge**

- The nicotine lozenge is available over-the-counter.
- The lozenge is placed along the gums, where the nicotine is absorbed through the lining of the mouth.
- A Mayo Clinic study showed that the lozenge is a promising treatment for spit tobacco users.

**Source:** <http://www.tobaccofreeu.org/cessation/medications.asp> (The BACCHUS Network)

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**For free and friendly help to quit smoking or chewing – whether you're ready to quit or just starting to think about it – call the [Oregon Tobacco Quit Line](#):**

**1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) • Español: 1-877-2NO-FUME (1-877-266-3863)**