

# Nicotine Replacement Therapy & Quit Smoking Aids

*To be most effective, nicotine replacement products and quit smoking aids should be used in conjunction with a behavior change program.*

## **Nicotine Patch**

- ❖ The nicotine patch releases a constant amount of nicotine in the body; the nicotine dissolves right through the skin and enters the body. The patches are similar to adhesive bandages and are available in different shapes and sizes. A larger patch delivers more nicotine through the skin.
- ❖ Less nicotine is obtained through the patch than in cigarettes. The patch does NOT contain all the tars and poisonous gases that are found in cigarettes.
- ❖ Studies have shown that it is much easier to give up the patch than it would be to give up cigarettes for two reasons. First, people usually develop cravings for things that provide immediate satisfaction, such as chocolate. With the patch, the nicotine level in the body stays relatively constant day after day. There is not immediate satisfaction, so there is little craving for a patch. Second, anything people do often, such as smoking, becomes a habit; since you apply the patch only once a day, there is no strong habit to break.
- ❖ The goal in using nicotine medications is to stop smoking completely. If you plan to take nicotine medications, *begin using them on the day you quit*. If you continue to have strong urges to smoke or are struggling to stop smoking completely, ask your healthcare provider about additional help.
- ❖ Some side effects from wearing the patch can include: Headaches, dizziness, upset stomach, weakness, blurred vision, vivid dreams, mild itching and burning on the skin, diarrhea.
- ❖ Wearing the nicotine patch lessens chances of suffering from several of the major smoking withdrawal symptoms such as tenseness, irritability, drowsiness, and lack of concentration.

## **Nicotine Gum**

- ❖ Nicotine gum contains enough nicotine to reduce the urge to smoke. The over-the-counter gum is available in the same strength as the original prescription product, 2mg (for smokers of 24 or fewer cigarettes each day) and 4mg (for smokers of 25 or more cigarettes each day).
- ❖ Like nicotine patches, nicotine gum helps take the edge off cigarette cravings without providing the tars and poisonous gases found in cigarettes. It is a temporary aid that reduces symptoms of nicotine withdrawal after quitting smoking.
- ❖ Nicotine gum must be used properly in order to be effective. Steps for nicotine gum users to follow include:
  - *Stop all smoking* when beginning the nicotine gum therapy.
  - Do not eat or drink for 15 minutes before using, or while chewing the gum (some beverages can reduce its effectiveness).
  - Chew the gum slowly on and off for 30 minutes to release most of the nicotine. Parking the gum between the cheek and gum allows the absorption of nicotine into the lining of the cheek.
  - Chew enough gum to reduce withdrawal symptoms (10-15 pieces a day, but no more than 30 a day).
  - Use the gum every day for about a month or so, then start to reduce the number of pieces you chew a day, chewing only what you need to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

## **Nicotine Nasal Spray**

- ❖ Nicotine nasal spray, dispensed from a pump bottle, relieves cravings for a cigarette. It delivers nicotine to the nasal membranes and reaches the bloodstream faster than any other NRT products. It is available by prescription.
- ❖ The 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.
- ❖ The nicotine spray is available only by prescription.

### **Nicotine Inhaler**

- ❖ The inhaler is a nicotine plug in a plastic rod that a user puffs on.
- ❖ Although labeled an "inhaler," in reality, almost none of the nicotine goes into the lungs; rather, it is absorbed in the mouth. Thus, the inhaler results in relatively low levels of nicotine in the blood.
- ❖ As with the gum and nasal spray, the inhaler can be used as needed, but it should be used at least hourly. The main advantage of using the inhaler is that it mimics the habit or hand-to-mouth motions of smoking.
- ❖ The most common side effects of the inhaler are mild coughing and throat irritation. Addiction to inhalers doesn't occur, but one drawback is that the inhaler produces less nicotine in cold weather (below 50 degrees).
- ❖ The nicotine inhaler is available only by prescription.

### **Nicotine Lozenge**

- ❖ *Stop all smoking* when beginning the nicotine lozenge therapy
- ❖ Each stop-smoking lozenge is meant to be sucked on and moved from side to side until it dissolves—just like a regular hard candy or medicinal lozenge.
- ❖ The over-the-counter lozenge is available in 2mg and 4mg. If you usually smoke your first cigarette within 30 minutes of waking up, use the 4mg lozenge. If you have your first smoke after 30 minutes, use the 2mg lozenge. Once you choose which dosage you need, you should stick with that dose all the way through.
- ❖ The lozenge should be allowed to dissolve slowly (20-30 minutes.) The lozenge gives off a warming tingle as it starts to dissolve and begins releasing medicine.
- ❖ Only one lozenge should be used at a time and no more than 20 lozenges (either dose) should be consumed within one day.
- ❖ The most common side effects are insomnia (reported in less than 5% of users), nausea, hiccups, coughing, heartburn, headache and flatulence.

### **Zyban/ Wellbutrin**

- ❖ A non-nicotine pill, bupropion hydrochloride (Zyban) was approved in 1997 to help smokers quit. The drug, available by prescription only, is also sold as an anti-depressant under the name Wellbutrin.
- ❖ You take medication for one week before you stop smoking and then for 6 to 12 weeks thereafter. The most common side effects are dry mouth and insomnia.

**\*The toll-free Call Center provides detailed and accurate information regarding nicotine replacement therapy products: 1.800.548.8252.**

**\*The FDA has not approved any combination of stop-smoking nicotine therapies.**

***\*It is necessary with all types of nicotine replacement therapy to follow the doctor's orders and use these products only as prescribed and/or according to labeling. These products can also be dangerous for pregnant women.***

### **American Lung Association Nicotine Replacement Therapy Statement**

*The American Lung Association continues to endorse nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Over 100 clinical trials (including an NIH-supported study involving people who used nicotine gum for five years) and extensive use over a number of years have proven the safety and efficacy of NRT products when used as directed. In direct contrast, tobacco smoke contains over 40 known carcinogens, plus many other toxins, such as carbon monoxide, arsenic and ammonia as well as substances that can trigger heart disease, emphysema and many other life-threatening diseases.*

*Leading experts in the field of smoking control agree that NRT products have a crucial role to play in helping to reduce the devastating toll of disease caused by tobacco dependence. The American Lung Association encourages further studies on NRTs. We do, however, caution that NRTs should be used as directed by the manufacturer.*