



Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

An American Lung Association® Fact Sheet

Nicotine replacement products help relieve some of the withdrawal symptoms people experience when they quit smoking. Three of these products currently are available over the counter in the United States – two nicotine patches and nicotine gum.

Nicotine nasal spray and a nicotine inhaler are available only by prescription. A new non-nicotine pill also is available as a smoking cessation treatment option. To be most effective, nicotine replacement products should be used in conjunction with a behavior change program.

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 also does not contain all the tars and poisonous gases that are found in cigarettes.

Most of the patch products are changed once every 24 hours. One particular patch is worn only during waking hours and is removed during sleep.

Studies have shown that it's much easier to give up the patch than it is 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 isn't immediate satisfaction, so there's 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's 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 health care 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 major smoking withdrawal symptoms, such as tenseness, irritability, drowsiness, and lack of concentration.

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 daily) and 4mg (for smokers of 25 or more cigarettes daily).

Like nicotine patches, nicotine gum helps take the edge off cigarette cravings without providing the tars and poisonous gases found in cigarettes. It's 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:

1. Stop all smoking when beginning the nicotine gum therapy.
2. Do not eat or drink for 15 minutes before using or while chewing the gum (some beverages can reduce its effectiveness).
3. 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.
4. Chew enough gum to reduce withdrawal symptoms (10-15 pieces a day, but no more than 30 a day).
5. Use the gum every day for 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.
6. Discontinue use of gum after three months.

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 product. 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. The nicotine enters the body much more slowly than the nicotine in cigarettes. The nicotine inhaler is available only by prescription.

A non-nicotine pill, bupropion hydrochloride (Zyban) was approved in 1997 to help smokers quit. The drug, available by prescription only, also is sold as an antidepressant under the name Wellbutrin.

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

Call your local American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or log onto www.lungusa.org for more information.

The Lung Association is offering a new way to stop smoking through its Freedom From Smoking® online smoking cessation clinic. The program is based on the Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking® program, which already has helped thousands of smokers quit smoking for good. The Freedom From Smoking® online smoking cessation clinic can be accessed day or night, seven days a week. Visit www.ffsonline.org and stop smoking today!

Tooth Talk

by Linda Kruetzer, RDH

Hidden Sugars in Foods

It's amazing to realize that **nine** teaspoons of sugar are in **one** can of Pepsi. Take a minute to measure out the sugar in a clear glass, teaspoon by teaspoon. For example, Hawaiian Punch has **eleven** teaspoons of sugar in a 12-ounce glass and Tang has **eleven** teaspoons. This is like drinking liquid sugar.

Now let's talk about sweetened cereal. In 1° cups of Sugar Smacks, **eight** teaspoons of sugar are "hiding." Most kids also pile a few teaspoons of sugar on top of their cereal.



Let's assume that a child has a glass of Tang (11 teaspoons of sugar), 1° cups of cereal (eight), and extra sugar on top (four).

That makes 23 teaspoons of sugar for breakfast, more than half a cup. No wonder some kids are "hyper" at school. That's what excess sugar does to the body, plus it causes tooth decay.

Our bodies need real food. **Any** kind of real fruit juice is better than artificially flavored drinks. Cans of frozen concentrated juice are cheaper and just as good as cans of real fruit juices. Real fruit juice does contain sugar, but in the form of fructose. This is a different kind of sugar, a more natural form than table sugar (sucrose).

The amount of sugar we eat adds up. In addition to tooth decay, excess sugar consumption can cause our bodies to go out of balance, increasing our risk of developing diabetes.



It takes practice to learn how to look for hidden sugars in so-called "healthy" foods. Consuming less sugar makes us feel better, decreases the risk of developing diabetes, and gives us a better checkup at the dentist.