

Quit for good

with the help of nicotine replacement therapy

Nearly 70% of adult smokers say they want to quit each year.

If you're one of them, you might want to consider nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).


The goal of NRT is to cut down on cravings for nicotine and ease the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. These treatments supply low doses of nicotine but do not contain many of the toxins found in smoke.

Adding a counseling program will make you more likely to quit.

Do not smoke while using nicotine replacement. It can cause nicotine to build up to toxic levels.

Before you start using a nicotine replacement product, take note ...





The dose of nicotine should be slowly decreased.

Nicotine replacement helps prevent weight gain while you are using it. You may still gain weight when you stop all nicotine use.

The more cigarettes you smoke, the higher the dose you may need to start.

Nicotine supplements

Nicotine supplements come in the form of skin patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers and nasal sprays. All these products work well when used correctly. People are more likely to use the gum and patches correctly than other forms, both of which are covered under UMR's Wellness CARE program.

SKIN PATCHES
GUM
LOZENGES
INHALERS
NASAL SPRAYS

Nicotine patch

You can buy nicotine patches without a prescription, or your health care provider may prescribe them. All nicotine patches are placed and used in similar ways:

- A single patch is worn each day.
- Place the patch on different areas above the waist and below the neck each day.
- People who wear each patch for 24 hours will have fewer withdrawal symptoms.



Side effects and risks

All nicotine products may cause side effects. Symptoms are more likely when you use very high doses. Reducing the dose can prevent these symptoms. Side effects include:

- **Headaches**
- **Nausea and other digestive problems**
- **Problems getting to sleep in the first few days, most often with the patch**

Talk to your doctor before starting any nicotine replacement therapy, particularly if you have heart or blood circulation problems. NRT may not be completely safe in pregnant women. And keep all nicotine products away from children. Call the doctor or poison control right away if a child has been exposed to a nicotine-containing product, even for a short time.

Nicotine nasal spray

The spray gives a quick dose of nicotine to satisfy a craving you can't ignore. Levels of nicotine peak within 5 to 10 minutes after using the spray. It requires a prescription.



- Follow your provider's instructions about how to use the spray. When you're starting to quit, you may be told to spray 1 to 2 times in each nostril, every hour. You should not spray more than 80 times in 1 day.
- The spray should not be used for longer than 6 months.
- The spray can irritate the nose, eyes and throat. These side effects often go away in a few days.



Nicotine gum or lozenge

You can buy nicotine gum or lozenges without a prescription. Some people prefer lozenges to the patch because they can control the nicotine dose. Tips for using the gum:

- If you're just starting to quit, chew one to two pieces each hour. Do not chew more than 20 pieces a day.
- Chew the gum slowly until it develops a peppery taste. Then, keep it between the gum and cheek, which lets the nicotine be absorbed.
- The goal is to stop using the gum by 12 weeks. Talk with your doctor before using the gum for a longer period.

Smoking cessation medications

Your health care provider can prescribe medications to help you quit tobacco use. These medications do not contain nicotine and are not habit forming. They work in a different way than nicotine replacement therapy products. Smoking cessation medications can help lessen the craving for tobacco, decrease withdrawal symptoms and keep you from starting to use tobacco again.

Bupropion (Zyban)

Bupropion is a pill that may lessen your craving for nicotine. It's also used for people with depression. It helps with quitting tobacco, even if you do not have problems with depression.

Varenicline (CHANTIX)

Varenicline helps with the craving for nicotine and withdrawal symptoms. It works in the brain to reduce the physical effects of nicotine. This means that even if you start smoking again after quitting, you will not get as much pleasure from it when you are taking this drug.

Other medications

These medications may help when other treatments have not worked. The benefits are far less consistent, so they're considered "second-line treatments":

- **Clonidine** is normally used to treat high blood pressure. It may help when it's started before quitting. This drug comes as a pill or patch.
- **Nortriptyline** is an antidepressant. It is started 10 to 28 days before quitting.



Nicotine inhaler

The nicotine inhaler looks like a plastic cigarette holder and can satisfy oral urges. It requires a prescription.

- Insert nicotine cartridges into the inhaler and "puff" for about 20 minutes. Do this up to 16 times a day.
- The inhaler is quick acting. It takes about the same time as the gum to act. It's faster than the two to four hours it takes for the patch to work.
- It can help to use the inhaler and patch together when quitting.

Helpful resources

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tobacco/nicotine dependence is a condition that often requires repeated treatments, but there are numerous helpful treatments and resources for quitting.

Here are a few to consider:

QuitGuide is a free app that helps you understand your smoking patterns and build the skills needed to become and stay smoke free. Use the app to track your cravings by time of day and location, and get motivational messages for each craving you track.

quitSTART is a free app that helps you quit smoking with tailored tips, inspiration and challenges.

Nicotine Anonymous is a 12-step program for people who want to live free of nicotine.

The American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout is November 18, challenging smokers to give up cigarettes for 24 hours.

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RX22GQL>