

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Although nicotine in tobacco is addictive and makes you want to smoke, it is not nicotine but the other chemicals in tobacco that increase the risk of smoking-related health problems.

When you stop smoking, your body still has a 'need' for nicotine, which creates an urge to smoke again. You may suffer withdrawal effects such as irritability, loss of concentration and sleepless nights. These effects will be reduced by using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

NRT is a relatively safe product. However, if you have certain medical conditions, or if you have recently had a heart attack or a stroke, or if you have problems with your heart rhythm, severe angina or uncontrolled blood pressure, your doctor or consultant will need to decide if you can use NRT.

Potential side effects of NRT:

- skin irritation or rash (discontinue if severe) (patches)
- sore throat (inhalator)
- sleep disturbance and vivid dreams (24 hour patch)
- nausea
- headache

- indigestion (particularly with oral products)
- watery eyes and nose, particularly in the first two days (nasal spray)
- mouth and throat irritation, specifically hiccups (QuickMist)

NRT is usually taken for two–three months after stopping smoking. It does not have the same addictive potential as smoking and few people feel the need to continue treatment for longer than this.

For 16 and 24 hour patch users:

- The best time to put your patch on is in the morning. **Use one patch a day.**
- Rotate where you put your patch everyday, leaving seven days before going back to the same site.
- Avoid broken or hairy skin. Common places to put your patch are your upper arm, shoulder, hip or chest (but not over the heart).
- Fold used patches in half to avoid children or pets coming into contact with them.
- Store your patches somewhere cool but **not in the fridge.**

Client information

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For 2mg and 4mg gum users:

- You need to use gum regularly in the first few weeks but **do not** use more than 15 pieces of gum a day.
- Nicotine is absorbed through the lining of the mouth. If you swallow it, the nicotine is wasted and you may experience hiccups or indigestion.
- Gum must be chewed correctly using a **chew, rest, chew** technique. Chew until you get a peppery taste then park between your cheek and your gum. When the taste disappears chew again and repeat the process. One piece lasts approximately 30 minutes.
- Avoid eating and drinking whilst using gum.

For 1.5mg/4mg mini lozenge, 2mg/4mg lozenge and Cools lozenge users:

- Avoid eating and drinking whilst using lozenge.
- Use lozenges regularly but do not exceed 15 a day.
- Do not chew or swallow lozenge.
- Place lozenge at the side of your mouth, alternating sides periodically.

For 15mg inhalator users:

- Sip on the inhalator as though sipping through a straw.
- Cartridges last for eight five-minute sessions or 40 minutes of intense use.
- Try to use the inhalator regularly but do not exceed six cartridges a day.
- Nicotine evaporates from the cartridge over time so we recommend changing cartridges at least every four hours.
- Cartridges may need to be warmed 'between the hands' before use on a cold day.
- The inhalator may initially cause mouth and throat irritation.
- Clean your mouthpiece regularly.

For QuickMist users:

- Prime spray before use: press dispenser firmly a couple of times with your index finger until a fine mist appears.
- Use the QuickMist regularly for the first few weeks, one–two sprays every 30 minutes to one hour.
- Use a maximum of four sprays an hour and do not exceed 64 sprays in any 24 hour period.
- Aim the spray into an open mouth avoiding the lips.
- To reduce the possibility of hiccups, try spraying QuickMist into the inside of the cheek or under the tongue, avoiding swallowing for a few seconds.
- Avoid eating and drinking when using QuickMist and for a few minutes after.

Important

This information sheet does NOT tell you everything about nicotine replacement products. Please refer to the product patient information leaflets. Maximum dosages of a second NRT product will need to be halved. If you have any queries please discuss with your GP, stop smoking advisor or your pharmacist.

Contact us

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