Smoking: Should I Use Nicotine Replacement to Quit?

Your choices

- You can try to quit smoking without using nicotine replacement medicines, such as nicotine gum, patches, inhalers, or lozenges.
- You can use nicotine replacement to help you deal with cravings and withdrawal symptoms, such as getting irritated easily.

Key points in making your decision

In the past, the only way to quit smoking was to slowly reduce how much you smoked or to quit all at once. Today, you have the choice of using nicotine products or prescription medicines that can make quitting easier. These also work if you smoke cigars or pipes and may work for other tobacco products, such as chew or snuff. Think about the following when making your decision:

- Studies show that using nicotine replacement doubles your chances of quitting smoking.
- Withdrawal symptoms and cravings cause many people to go back to smoking. Nicotine replacement helps relieve these symptoms.
- Your insurance company may pay for all or part of it. Even if you have to pay for nicotine replacement yourself, think about how much money you will save by not having to buy tobacco anymore.
- If you are pregnant, have heart problems, take mental health medicines, or are under 18, talk to your doctor before you use nicotine replacement.

Think about the facts and about what matters most to you. To help with your decision, take this information to your doctor and talk with him or her about your thoughts and feelings. Ask for more information if needed.
### Reasons to use nicotine replacement to quit smoking

- You have cravings or withdrawal symptoms such as feeling irritable when you go too long without a cigarette.
- You have tried to quit without nicotine replacement, but you started smoking again.
- You want to increase your chances of quitting as much as possible.

### Reasons to not use nicotine replacement to quit smoking

- You have sensitive skin that may react to the nicotine patch.
- You cannot use a nicotine inhaler because you have asthma, allergies, or another breathing problem.
- You smoke fewer than 10 cigarettes a day.

### Types of nicotine replacement

Nicotine replacement comes in the form of gum, lozenges, patches, and inhalers. Any of these can help you quit smoking, but you might prefer one kind over another. Here are some things to think about when you make the choice:

- Nicotine gum, lozenges, and inhalers can be used to ease sudden urges to smoke.
- A nicotine patch may be a good option if you like the idea of putting on a patch in the morning and forgetting about it until bedtime.
- Your doctor may suggest that you use more than one type. For example, if you are using the patch, maybe gum can help for those times you need something more.
- You can get nicotine gum, lozenges, and patches without a prescription. The gum and lozenges come in different strengths and flavors.

You may want to consider nicotine replacement if any of these apply to you:

- You are ready to quit.
- You need help with nicotine cravings or withdrawal symptoms.
- You have tried on your own to stop smoking but you weren't able to stop.
- You smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day.

### Where can you find out more?

**Smokefree.gov:** 1-800-QUITNOW
(1-800-784-8669) www.smokefree.gov

**American Cancer Society:** 1-800-ACS-2345
(1-800-227-2345) www.cancer.org

**National Cancer Institute:** 1-800-4-CANCER
(1-800-422-6237) www.cancer.gov

**American Lung Association:**
1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)
www.lungusa.org

©2007-2015 Healthwise, Incorporated. Healthwise disclaims any liability for use of this information, which does not replace medical advice. 2014-09-zu1835