

## Smoking: Should I Use Nicotine Replacement to Quit?



Making health decisions is part of life. These decisions can have a big effect on your health and happiness. Some decisions may affect how good your health care is. Others may affect how much it costs. Most people feel better about their health care when they take part in these decisions.

This information will help you understand your choices, whether you take part in the decision or ask your doctor to decide. Your decision should be based on the medical facts as well as your own feelings.

### 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.

Reasons to use nicotine replacement to quit smoking	Reasons to not use nicotine replacement to quit smoking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have cravings or withdrawal symptoms such as feeling irritable when you go too long without a cigarette.</li> <li>• You have tried to quit without nicotine replacement, but you started smoking again.</li> <li>• You want to increase your chances of quitting as much as possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have sensitive skin that may react to the nicotine patch.</li> <li>• You cannot use a nicotine inhaler because you have asthma, allergies, or another breathing problem.</li> <li>• You smoke fewer than 10 cigarettes a day.</li> </ul>

## 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.
- If you are pregnant or under 18, your doctor may want you to try other ways of quitting before trying a nicotine patch or other products.

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 are not ready to quit nicotine, but you want to quit smoking.

## Where can you find out more?

**Smokefree.gov:** 1-800-QUITNOW  
(1-800-784-8669) [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

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

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

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