

# Ways To Stop Using Tobacco

## *Prescription Methods*



### **Purpose of Medicines**

- These medicines are used to remove cravings or lower them to a level you can manage.

If your cravings are still severe while using these medicines, call your doctor or tobacco counselor for help in making changes to dosages or medicine.

- When cravings are less intense and less often, they allow you to focus on figuring out how to live your life without tobacco. Sometimes this is as simple as changing a habit. Other triggers, such as stress, can sometimes take longer to figure out how to cope without tobacco use.

Keep using medicines until your new routine and coping skills feel comfortable for you.

### **Varenicline/Chantix™**

#### ■ **What it is:**

It is a non-nicotine aid that, for many people, reduces

withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke. It should be used with a support program.



Chantix is currently unavailable. It is available as a generic medicine.

#### ■ **How to use:**

- The starting recommended dosage is 1 white tablet (0.5 mg) at breakfast for the first 3 days.
- On days 4 through 7, take 1 white tablet (0.5 mg) at breakfast and 1 white tablet (0.5 mg) with the evening meal.
- On days 8 through the end of the treatment, take 1 blue tablet (1 mg) at breakfast and 1 blue tablet (1 mg) with the evening meal. Try and take the evening dose (second dose) earlier in the day, as close to the breakfast dose as possible, as you are able.
- The recommended length of treatment is at least 12 weeks. Set your quit date for day 8.
- If you are not ready to quit yet, you can use varenicline to help increase your chance of quitting. Talk with your doctor about how to do this.

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- **Side effects:** The most common side effects are upset stomach (nausea), changes in dreaming, constipation, gas, or throwing up. Nausea often goes away if you continue taking this medicine for at least 2 weeks.

Taking varenicline with a full meal and a full glass of water can help prevent or reduce nausea. You can also eat bananas, or take a lower dose. If you still have nausea, consider reducing to a half dose of 0.5 mg pill 2 times per day. (It is OK to cut the 1 mg pills in half.) Studies have shown that lowering the dose may still be effective in helping to quit while reducing nausea.

If your dreams bother you, take the second pill of the day as close to the first pill as you can handle without nausea. If this doesn't help, consider taking only 1 mg pill each day with breakfast.

Some people have reported severe depression or thoughts of suicide while using varenicline. This is rare. Call your doctor if this happens to you

- **Length of treatment:** The recommended length of treatment is at least 12 weeks as long as you do not smoke cigarettes from day 8 to the end of the 12 weeks. If you do use tobacco during this time, you will need to stay on varenicline for another 12 weeks to raise your chances of quitting.

Use as directed by your doctor. If you have quit smoking, ask your doctor if taking it longer would help you stay tobacco-free. Some people choose to take varenicline for up to 1 year.

- **Advantages:** You may start taking varenicline before you quit smoking. You should set a quit date for day 8 of the treatment. If you choose to quit before day 8, you may use a nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches or gum) to help manage cravings until day 8.
- **Disadvantage:** Varenicline takes a few days to a few weeks to reach the right levels in your body to work.

## Zyban®/Wellbutrin®/Bupropion

- **What it is:** It is a non-nicotine anti-depressant that, for many patients, reduces withdrawal symptoms and the urge to use tobacco. It works best with a support program.
- **How to use:** Take as directed by your doctor. The usual dose is one 150 mg tablet in the morning for the first three days. Starting on the fourth day, take one 150 mg tablet in the



morning and one 150 mg tablet in the early evening. Take your doses at least 8 hours apart. If you want to take your dosages one time a day, talk with your doctor about the extended release option.

- **Side effects:** The most common side effects are dizziness, upset stomach, headache, dry mouth and sleeping problems. It can cause depression or suicidal thoughts. (This is rare.)

If you have anxiety, bupropion may make it worse. Keep using bupropion if you can manage the anxiety. You can take the lower dose longer or use the extended release form. Anxiety should get better in 2 to 4 weeks. Call your doctor if your anxiety doesn't get better or if it gets worse.

Do not drink alcohol when taking this medicine.

- **Length of treatment:** It should be used for at least 12 weeks. There is no limit on how long it can be used.
- **Advantages:** You may start taking Zyban before you quit using tobacco. Set a quit date after 7 to 10 days of therapy. Once your cravings lower, work hard to quit smoking.

This medicine will continue to work its best only as long as you stay tobacco-free. Zyban may be used at the same time as nicotine replacement therapy.

- **Disadvantages:** It takes 1 to 3 weeks for Zyban to reach the right levels in your body to work.

## Nicotine Inhaler (Nicotrol® Inhaler)

- **What it is:** It is a foil-wrapped nicotine cartridge put inside a hollow cigarette-like plastic tube. The inhaler produces a nicotine vapor when warm air is passed through the tube. The vapor can't be seen. This is not the electronic cigarette.
- **How to use:** Line up the markings (in the unlocked position). Pull apart the 2 sections of the inhaler. Insert the nicotine cartridge. Push the 2 sections back together.



This will pierce the seal on both ends of the cartridge. Turn the top and bottom pieces so the markings do not line up (in the locked position).

Use the same way you would smoke a cigar, puffing the nicotine through the plastic tube. Do not inhale into the lungs or past your throat as it may cause coughing, burning or both and will not be absorbed correctly into your system.

As you puff, there may be a taste which has been described as “minty or “peppery.” You might not be able to taste it, but the medicine is still working. Each cartridge usually lasts for about 20 minutes of active puffing (about 80 puffs). It can take up to 15 minutes for the nicotine to be fully absorbed, so the first few times you use this you may want to watch your clock.

Puff until you feel your craving is manageable. Most people find this happens in 10-15 minutes of using the inhaler. For some people it is less and for some it is more. Replace the cartridge once you have puffed a total amount of 20 minutes or until it no longer seems effective. This could be after using it 1 to 4 times, depending on how quickly it satisfies your craving. Throw away the used cartridge where children and pets cannot get to it.

Each cartridge is equal to smoking about 2 cigarettes. For example, if you smoke 1 pack a day, you would use about 10 cartridges a day, tapering off after 3 months. You may use up to 16 cartridges each day.

For the nicotine to be absorbed well, it is best to store the cartridges at room temperature and to try not to eat or drink anything for 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after using it.

- **Side effects:** It may cause minor throat irritation or coughing.
- **Length of treatment:** Use it when you need to for 3 months or longer, if needed.
- **Advantages:** It mirrors smoking as it includes the comfort of hand-to-mouth ritual. It can be used anywhere that smoking is not allowed. This will not harm the health of anyone around you.
- **Disadvantages:** Some people want to completely get away from anything that feels like smoking. Sometimes the inhaler feels too much like smoking. If you are not getting the full effect, make sure you are using it as directed.

## Nicotine Nasal Spray

- **What it is:** It is a nicotine solution in a nasal spray bottle.
- **How to use:** Blow your nose if it is not clear. Tilt your head back slightly and insert the tip of the bottle into your nostril. Breathe through your mouth.

Spray once in the lining of each nostril. Do not sniff or inhale while spraying. One spray equals one dose and one cigarette.

- **Side effects:** The major side effects are nasal and throat irritation, rhinitis, sneezing, coughing and watering eyes. Be sure to use it regularly the first week to help adjust to



the side effects.

- **Length of treatment:** Use as directed by your doctor. Do not use more than 5 times each hour or 40 times each day. Do not use for more than 3 months in a row.
- **Advantage:** It works quickly.
- **Disadvantage:** You may not use enough each day and each week to get the benefit.

## Combination Therapy

This is when more than one type of quitting tobacco medicine is used at the same time. For example, using Zyban at the same time as the nicotrol inhaler. Talk with your doctor, pharmacist or tobacco counselor about what dosages are right for you.

## Resources

### Allina Health (if you had a recent hospital stay)

- Tobacco Intervention Program at Abbott Northwestern Hospital  
— 612-863-1648
- Tobacco Intervention Program at Mercy Hospital  
— 763-236-8008
- Tobacco Intervention Program at River Falls Area Hospital  
— 715-307-6075
- Tobacco Intervention Services at Allina Health United Hospital – Hastings Regina Campus  
— 715-307-6075
- \*United Hospital Lung and Sleep Clinic Tobacco Cessation Program  
— 651-726-6200
- \*Penny George™ Institute for Health and Healing (LiveWell Center) tobacco intervention coaching  
— 612-863-5178

### Other

- Quit Partner  
— 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or [quitpartnermn.com](http://quitpartnermn.com)  
— My Life, My Quit™ (ages 13 to 17): text “Start My Quit” to 36072 or call 1-855-891-9989 to talk with a coach  
— American Indian: 1-833-9AI-QUIT or [aiquit.com](http://aiquit.com)  
— Spanish: 1-855-DEJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569) or [quitpartnermn.com/es](http://quitpartnermn.com/es)  
— [asiansmokersquitline.org](http://asiansmokersquitline.org)
- online tobacco cessation support  
— [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov)
- American Lung Association/ Tobacco Quit Line  
— 651-227-8014 or 1-800-586-4872
- financial aid Nicotrol® inhaler  
— 1-844-989-PATH (7284) or [pfizerrxpathways.com](http://pfizerrxpathways.com)
- Plant Extracts aromatherapy  
— 1-877-999-4236 or [plantextractsinc.com](http://plantextractsinc.com)

\*There may be a cost to you. Check with your insurance provider.