

EXPERT ADVICE

Ask the Pharmacist: Quit Smoking Tips

Thinking of breaking tobacco addiction for good? You can talk to your local pharmacist about quitting the smoking habit and the use of medication to help you achieve that. Here are some tips.



When smokers try to quit smoking, many do experience unpleasant symptoms such as cravings for cigarettes and irritability. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) helps those who want to quit smoking by combating their cravings and urge to smoke.

Choose the right medication

NRT is commonly available in the form of patches and gum. A tip on choosing the right product is to find a product that suits your needs the most.

Nicotine patches are easy to use. They are available in different strengths and exert their effect over different lengths of time. They deliver nicotine in a steady dose to your body through your skin. A good thing about using a patch is that it is not noticeable by others.

However, if you prefer to have more control over the dose and faster delivery of nicotine, you could try nicotine gum.

Nicotine gum works by releasing nicotine when you chew it. Nicotine is then absorbed through the lining of the mouth.

Learn the correct usage

Whichever medication you choose to use, it is important to always follow the directions of usage. If you are using a nicotine patch, it is advisable not to use the same spot for two

consecutive days to avoid skin irritation.

As for nicotine gum, it is important to learn the correct chewing technique. Do not chew it the way you do with regular gum. Chew it slowly until you note its taste, then stop chewing. Place or 'park' it between your gums and cheek until the taste fades. Continue this method of chewing and 'parking', which could take about 20 to 30 minutes.

Break the addiction

If you are not successful in your attempt to quit smoking with one type of NRT product, do not give up all hope of quitting. Many smokers have found success after trying a different NRT product.

To increase your chances of quitting the smoking habit, it is advisable to combine NRT with the following methods:

- Come up with a plan to quit smoking, and the steps you want to take to stop smoking. Quitting smoking does require long-term commitment.
- Seek individual or group counselling, which will help you to cope with problems that come up during quitting and to provide support and encouragement in staying quit.
- Seek the support of family and friends. **OH!**

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