

NICOTINE PATCH 21mg, 14mg, 7mg **+** **NICOTINE GUM** 2mg, 4mg

WHAT DOES THIS MEDICATION DO?

Nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) release nicotine to decrease withdrawal symptoms. The patch will release small but continuous amounts of nicotine into the body through the skin to help decrease withdrawal symptoms. Use the nicotine gum as needed to manage breakthrough cravings and urges to use tobacco. Combining NRTs is more effective than using either alone. Participating in behavioral counseling while using this medication will increase your likelihood of staying tobacco-free.

HOW DO I USE IT?

Nicotine Patch - Use Daily

- Begin using the patch on your quit date.
- Each day, apply one new patch when you wake up. Make sure the old patch is removed before applying a new patch.
- Peel the back off the patch and put it on clean, dry, hair-free skin on your upper arm, chest, or back.
- Press patch firmly in place for 10 seconds so it will stick well to your skin.
- You can bathe, shower, and swim while wearing the patch.
- Avoid wearing the patch on the same area more than once a week.
- Fold the used patch in half with the sticky sides together and throw it in the regular trash, away from children or pets.
- Based on your nicotine dependence level, you will typically start with 21mg or 14mg patches and may use the same strength for 1-2 months before stepping down to a lower dose.
- Begin using the gum on your quit date along with the patch as needed for cravings/urges. May be more effective using it consistently in the beginning of your quit attempt to reduce cravings and withdrawals.

Nicotine Gum - Use As Needed

- Unlike what you do with regular gum, bite down slowly a few times until you feel a slight tingling in your mouth.
- Park the gum between your cheek and gum. Leave it there for about one minute so you can absorb the nicotine.
- Repeat biting and parking until the taste or tingle is gone. One piece of gum lasts 20–30 minutes.
- Do not bite down too quickly on the gum or swallow the nicotine.
- Avoid eating or drinking anything acidic 15 minutes before using the gum or during use.
- You may start with up to 10 pieces of gum per day and then reduce over time. You may increase your use of the gum again when you step down from a higher dose patch to a lower dose of patch.

If you use tobacco occasionally while taking the medicine, continue using your NRTs and try not to use tobacco. Call your VA provider, the **1-855-QUIT-VET** tobacco quitline (**1-855-784-8838**), or attend a tobacco cessation group to help you get back on track.



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WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS?

Nicotine Patch:

- May cause minor burning, itching or redness of skin. To reduce the risk of this problem, avoid using the patch on the same area within one week.
- If you have skin irritation for more than four days or if you have severe burning or hives, remove the patch and stop using it. Contact your healthcare provider right away.*
- Sleep problems or vivid dreams may occur. If so, remove the patch before going to sleep.

**Some people may be allergic to the adhesive material used in the patch.*

Nicotine Gum:

- May cause mouth soreness, oral irritation, hiccups, jaw aches, nausea and vomiting. Proper gum use can help to avoid these side effects.
- If you have any intolerable side effects, stop using the gum and contact your healthcare provider.

