

NICOTINE CESSATION

Nicotine Withdrawal

Quitting “cold turkey” will result in Nicotine withdrawal. Withdrawal symptoms will peak somewhere between 1-3 days after quitting then slowly resolve over 3-4 weeks. Symptoms may include:

- Feeling restless or anxious
- Feeling irritable, easily frustrated or easily angered
- Feeling down, depressed mood or decreased enjoyment in activities
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Increased appetite or weight gain

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) can help minimize the withdrawal symptoms. Nonprescription options (patch, gum, lozenge) have proven to be as effective as prescription options (inhaler and nasal spray).

Experts recommend combining the long-acting patch with a short-acting form such as gum or lozenge. One study of over 1,000 smokers compared 12 weeks of nicotine patch, nicotine patch plus nicotine lozenge, and varenicline (Chantix®) and found no differences in confirmed rates of smoking abstinence among the three groups.

Nicotine Patch

The patch gives a steady dose of nicotine that is absorbed through the skin. People typically put a patch on in the morning and change it at bedtime. Using nicotine gum or lozenges to treat cravings while using the patch is both safe and recommended.

Dosing is determined by the number of cigarettes smoked daily:

- **>10** cigarettes per day and weight >99 lbs: Start with the highest dose nicotine patch (21 mg/day) for six weeks, then 14 mg/day for two weeks, and finish with 7 mg/day for two weeks.
- **≤10** cigarettes per day or weight < 99 lbs: Start with the medium dose nicotine patch (14 mg/day) for six weeks, followed by 7 mg/day for two weeks.
- Apply one patch each morning to any non-hairy skin site; rotate the site daily to avoid skin irritation. (Use 1% hydrocortisone cream or ointment to relieve skin irritation if it occurs.)
- Remove and replace the patch with a new one at bedtime. However, if leaving the patch on overnight is causing insomnia and vivid dreams, replace the patch the next morning. Smoking cessation rates are similar whether the patch is left on for 24 hours or taken off at night.
- When the patch is removed at night, substantial plasma levels of nicotine are reached 30 minutes to three hours after a new patch is applied in the morning. If the patch is removed at night and morning nicotine cravings occur, use a short-acting NRT (gum, lozenge) while waiting for the nicotine patch to take effect.

Nicotine Gum

Chewing the gum results in peak blood nicotine levels 20 minutes after starting to chew. Nicotine gum is available in several flavors. It can be used alone or in combination with a nicotine patch. If used with a nicotine patch, the gum should be used at times of cravings.

Dosing is determined by the number of cigarettes smoked daily:

- **≥ 25 cigarettes per day** – 4 mg dose of gum is recommended
- **< 25 cigarettes per day** – 2 mg dose of gum is recommended
- Proper chewing of gum is important for optimal results. Side effects can occur if the gum is chewed too rapidly, thereby releasing too much nicotine too quickly. “Chew and park” is recommended: chew the gum until the nicotine taste appears, then “park” the gum in the cheek until the taste disappears, then chew a few more times to release more nicotine. Repeat this for 30 minutes, then discard the gum (because all nicotine in the gum has been released).
- Side effects are typically due to overly vigorous chewing and consist of nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, constipation, hiccups, headache and excess salivation.

Continued on the back

Nicotine Gum Continued

- Avoid acidic beverages (coffee, carbonated drinks) immediately before and during gum use, because they reduce nicotine absorption.
- Chewing gum may exacerbate temporomandibular joint problems and the gum can damage or adhere to dental appliances. Smokers with these concerns may do better with the lozenge.

If you are only using the gum (and not the patch also) follow these directions for use:

- Chew at least one piece of gum every 1-2 hours while awake and whenever there is an urge to smoke.
- Use no more than 24 pieces of gum per day for six weeks.
- Over the next 6 weeks, gradually reduce use for a total duration of three months.

Nicotine Lozenge

Lozenges are easier to use correctly than nicotine gum and are available in different flavors. A smaller mini-lozenge that resembles a Tic Tac® is also on the market. It dissolves quickly and delivers nicotine more rapidly than the original lozenge.

Dosing is determined by how soon the first cigarette is typically smoked upon awakening:

- Smokers who smoke within 30 minutes of awakening: 4 mg dose recommended
- Smokers who wait more than 30 minutes after awakening to smoke: 2 mg dose recommended
- Place lozenge in the mouth and allow it to dissolve for 30 minutes. The lozenge should not be chewed.
- Side effects include mouth irritation or ulcers in addition to nicotine-related side effects of abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache and palpitations.

If you are only using the lozenge (and not the patch also) follow these directions for use:

- Use up to one lozenge every one to two hours for six weeks. The maximum dose is five lozenges every six hours or 20 lozenges per day.
- Gradually reduce number of lozenges used per day over a second six weeks.

Any of the NRT options can be continued for more than 12 weeks if you find that nicotine cravings or withdrawal symptoms are still present. The ultimate goal is to keep you from smoking and to get off all nicotine containing products. Some people require a longer time to taper off. It is important to continue to decrease the dose and frequency of the nicotine replacement option you have chosen until you no longer need it.

Campus One-on-One Consultation and Support

Consultation appointments are available to discuss your reasons for quitting and explore resources to support you along the way. Schedule online at MyJMUChart or call UHC's The Well at 540-568-2831.

Online / Mobile Supports

- **Quit Now Virginia** (www.quitnow.net/virginia) offers free cessation support. Connect with 1-on-1 support to beat urges, manage withdrawal symptoms and switch up your habits so you can enjoy life tobacco free.
- **QuitGuide** (<https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/quitguide>) is a free app that helps you understand your smoking pattern and build skills needed to become and stay smoke free.
- **quitSTART** (<https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/quitstart>) is a free app that takes the information you provide about your smoking history and gives you tailored tips, inspiration and challenges to help you become smoke free.
- **This is Quitting** (<http://www.thisisquitting.com/>) offers JUUL/e-cigarette cessation support. This free mobile program is designed by the Truth Initiative to help young people quit with inspiration from others like them. Text DITCHJUUL to 887-09 to get started.
- **BecomeAnEX** (<http://www.becomeanex.org>) is a free digital quit-smoking plan and community created by Truth Initiative in collaboration with Mayo Clinic.

This is not a complete list of online cessation resources nor is it an endorsement for any specific resources.