



---

# Helping Smokers Quit

A Guide for Nurses

---



National Quitline

**1-800-QUIT NOW**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Public Health Service

March 2005



**If the 2.2 million working nurses in the U.S.  
each helped one person per year quit smoking,  
nurses would triple the U.S. quit rate.**

Tobacco Free Nurses



*open for medication chart*

Implement a system in your clinical setting that ensures that tobacco-use status is obtained and recorded at every patient contact.

**VITAL SIGNS**

Blood Pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

Pulse: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Temperature: \_\_\_\_\_

Respiratory Rate: \_\_\_\_\_

Tobacco Use: ☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Never  
(circle one)

Advise

# Advise tobacco users to quit.

Tell your patient

*“quitting smoking is the  
most important thing you  
can do to protect your  
health.”*



# Assess readiness to quit.

Ask every tobacco user if he/she is willing to quit at this time.

- ▶ If willing to quit, provide resources and assistance (see *Assist* section).
- ▶ If unwilling to quit, provide resources and help patient identify barriers to quitting.



# Assist tobacco users with a quit plan.

## Advise the smoker to:

- ▶ Set a quit date, ideally within 2 weeks.
- ▶ Get support from family, friends, and coworkers.
- ▶ Review past quit attempts—what helped, what led to relapse.
- ▶ Anticipate challenges, particularly during the critical first few weeks, including nicotine withdrawal.
- ▶ Identify reasons for quitting and benefits of quitting.

*(more)*



*(Assist continued)*

### **Give advice on successful quitting:**

- ▶ Total abstinence is essential—not even a single puff.
- ▶ Drinking alcohol is strongly associated with relapse.
- ▶ Having other smokers in the household hinders successful quitting.

### **Encourage use of pharmacotherapy:**

- ▶ Recommend use of over-the-counter nicotine patch, gum, or lozenge\*; or get prescription for nasal spray, inhaler, or bupropion SR, unless contraindicated.

### **Provide resources:**

- ▶ Call toll-free National Quitline at 1-800-QUIT NOW.
- ▶ Refer to Web sites for free materials:
  - Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality:  
[www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm)
  - Tobacco Free Nurses:  
[www.tobaccofreenurses.org](http://www.tobaccofreenurses.org)

Make cessation materials available that are appropriate by age, culture, language, education, and pregnancy status.

\* Approved by the FDA October 2002.



# Arrange followup visits.

Provide information for followup visits with his/her health care provider.

If a relapse occurs, encourage repeat quit attempt. Tell patient that relapse is part of the quitting process.

- ▶ Review circumstances that caused relapse. Use relapse as a learning experience.
- ▶ Reassess pharmacotherapy use and problems.
- ▶ Refer to National Quitline at 1-800-QUIT NOW.

For more information on prescribing, precautions, and side effects, see the Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline, *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*, [www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm).



## Suggestions for the Clinical Use of Pharmacotherapies for Smoking Cessation<sup>a</sup>

Pharmacotherapy	Precautions/Contraindications	Side Effects	Dosage	Duration	Availability
<b>Nicotine Patch</b>		Local skin reaction Insomnia	21 mg/24 hours 14 mg/24 hours 7 mg/24 hours  15 mg/16 hours	4 weeks then 2 weeks then 2 weeks  8 weeks	Nicoderm CQ, (OTC <sup>b</sup> only), Generic patches (prescription and OTC) Nicotrol (OTC only)
<b>Nicotine Gum</b>		Mouth soreness Dyspepsia	1-24 cigs/day-2mg gum (up to 24 pcs/day) 25+ cigs/day-4 mg gum (up to 24 pcs/day)	Up to 12 weeks	Nicorette, Nicorette Mint, Nicorette Orange (OTC only)
<b>Nicotine Nasal Spray</b>		Nasal irritation	8-40 doses/day	3-6 months	Nicotrol NS (prescription only)
<b>Nicotine Inhaler</b>		Local irritation of mouth and throat	6-16 cartridges/day	Up to 6 months	Nicotrol Inhaler (prescription only)
<b>Nicotine Lozenge<sup>c</sup></b>		Mouth soreness Local irritation of throat Hiccups Heartburn/Indigestion	2 mg or 4 mg (up to 20 pcs/day)	12 weeks	Commit (OTC only)
<b>Bupropion SR</b>	History of seizure History of eating disorder	Insomnia Dry mouth	150 mg every morning for 3 days then 150 mg twice daily (Begin treatment 1-2 weeks pre-quit)	7-12 weeks maintenance up to 6 months	Zyban (prescription only)

<sup>a</sup>The information contained within this table is not comprehensive.

<sup>b</sup>OTC refers to over the counter.

<sup>c</sup>The nicotine lozenge was approved by the FDA October 2002.

Please see medication package insert for additional information.

