
Information from your Patient Aligned Care Team

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING NICOTINE GUM (NICORETTE)

How Nicotine Gum Will Help You

Nicotine chewing gum is used to help people stop smoking cigarettes. It acts as a substitute oral activity to satisfy your craving for tobacco. It also provides a source of nicotine that can reduce the withdrawal symptoms you may experience when smoking is stopped.

Instructions for Using Nicotine Gum

1. Follow the directions on the label, and ask your Primary Care Provider (PCP) or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Use nicotine gum exactly as directed. Although Nicotine gum is used by mouth as a gum, it is not “chewed” like regular gum.
2. Begin using nicotine gum therapy after you stop smoking on your Quit Date. You should not smoke while you are using this medication, either before or after your Quit Date.
3. Treatment is started by using the 2-mg or the 4mg gum. Heavy smokers (those smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day OR those who smoke the first cigarette of the day within 30 minutes after waking up in the morning) may start by using the 4-mg gum.
4. Nicotine gum should be chewed slowly until you can taste the nicotine (peppery taste) or feel a slight tingling in your mouth (usually after about 15 to 30 chews). Then stop chewing and place (park) the chewing gum between your cheek and gum. When the tingling is almost gone (about 1 minute), start chewing again; repeat this chew and park procedure for about 30 minutes or

until the tingling or taste does not return. Be sure to rotate the gum to different places between your cheek and gum each time.

5. Do not chew nicotine gum too fast, do not chew more than one piece of gum at a time, and do not chew one piece too soon after another.
6. Avoid eating and drinking (especially acidic beverages such as coffee, juice, or soft drinks) for 15 minutes before and during chewing of nicotine gum to make sure all the nicotine from the gum can get into your system.
7. Be sure to use the Nicotine gum at regular times throughout the day. Most people use about 8 to 10 pieces a day when they first start.
8. **If you are using this medication along with transdermal nicotine patch therapy, follow these instructions:** Use 1 piece of gum every 1 to 2 hours when you have cravings to smoke. The maximum number is 12 pieces per day.
9. Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

Use frequently for 6 weeks. Then after you have gone 14 days in a row without strong cravings or withdrawal symptoms begin to slowly taper off. Don't worry if you continue to use some gum for many months. The important thing is to stay smoke free.

Precautions

Before using nicotine gum, tell your PCP and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking. Tell your PCP if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while using nicotine gum, stop using it and call your PCP immediately. Nicotine and nicotine gum may cause harm to the fetus.

Although side effects from nicotine are not common, they can occur. Tell your PCP if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- mouth ulcers
- mouth irritation
- jaw muscle aches
- hiccups
- heartburn
- dizziness

The Center for Integrated Healthcare gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the VA Cooperative Studies Program #519 prepared by Miles McFall, Ph.D. and Andrew Saxon, M.D. for the content of this handout.

- headache
- upset stomach
- nausea