

# Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)



## Nicotine Patch (21mg, 14mg, 7mg)

### Common Use

This medication is typically used to minimize withdrawal symptoms from quitting smoking by replacing some of your cigarettes' nicotine with a low, continuous and steady dosing of clean nicotine. Reducing withdrawal symptoms can help make quitting smoking more tolerable. The nicotine patch can be used in combination with other Nicotine Replacement Therapies. Nicotine Replacement Therapy works best when used in combination with behavioural quit smoking strategies.

### How to Use

- Apply a fresh patch to a clean, dry area of your upper body (above your waist) shortly after waking and leave it on for 24 hours.
- The outside of your upper arms tends to have less hair, so it works well as a patch application site.
- Handle the sticky part of the patch as little as possible.
- Apply the patch to the skin and press down firmly around the outside edges so that no water, dirt or oil gets under the edges.
- Any oil on your skin will prevent the patch from sticking properly. Avoid using lotions or moisturizers on the skin where patch is to be applied.
- If patch is not sticking well, try cleaning the area with rubbing alcohol first to remove any oils. You can also use medical tape or an arm band to hold the patch in place if it is not sticking well.
- Remove the old patch before applying a new patch.
- After removal, fold the old patch in half (sticky sides together) and place in a garbage where young children and/or pets will not be able to access. The small amount of nicotine left in the patch can be very harmful to children and pets.
- Wash hands in water (do not use soap) after patch application.
- Switch the patch location each day (alternate arms and rotate patch location) to reduce irritation from the adhesive on the patch.

### Possible Side Effects

- May cause localized skin irritation. This is a reaction to the adhesive on the patch. Talk to your pharmacist about anti-allergy creams that may help relieve any itchiness (e.g., aloe, hydrocortisone). Remember to not put the patch in the same spot 2 days in a row.
- May cause sleep disturbances. Try to persevere for a couple of days. This effect often wanes. If the sleep disturbance is not tolerable, take the patch off 1-2 hours before bed. Be prepared to wake in withdrawal and have strategies ready to use to avoid having a cigarette.

### General Information

- It is important to tell your health practitioner if you:
  - Have recently had a heart attack, stroke, worsening angina or arrhythmias
  - Are pregnant or breastfeeding
  - Are currently taking the medications Champix® (also called Chantix® or varenicline) or Zyban® (also called Wellbutrin® or bupropion)
  - Experience an allergic reaction away from the site of the patch application
  - Experience any of the signs of too much nicotine: Nausea and/or vomiting, excessive sweating, vertigo, tremors, confusion, weakness, racing heart, or light-headedness
- If you experience any of the signs of too much nicotine, take the patch off for a couple of hours. Do not use any products with nicotine during this time (including cigarettes). If the symptoms go away, you may be receiving too much nicotine and will need to reduce your NRT dose by switching to a lower dose patch or using the nicotine inhaler, gum or lozenge less frequently.