

# How NRT Works and How to Use It



Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) contains nicotine to help reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting.

NRT is a safe way to provide nicotine as it does not contain the chemicals and toxins found in cigarettes.

By using any form of NRT you can double your chances of successfully quitting smoking.

\* Always read manufacturer's instructions before using any new medications.

## The Patch:

The nicotine patch sticks to your skin like a bandage and provides a slow and steady dose of nicotine over 24 hours.

**How to Use:** Remove the patch from its wrapper right before you are ready to use it. Peel off the backing and place the patch anywhere on the upper body in a clean, dry, hairless area. After 24 hours remove the patch and place it in the garbage out of reach of children and pets. Apply a new patch in a different spot every day.

If sleeping problems occur, take the patch off before bed time and place a new patch on upon waking.

## The Mouth Spray:

The mouth spray is a fast acting spray that releases nicotine to be absorbed in the mouth. Use the spray whenever you have the urge to smoke.

**How to Use:** Hold the dispenser as close as possible to your open mouth avoiding the lips. Press the top of the dispenser down and release one spray. Do not inhale while using the spray or swallow for a few seconds after use. Do not eat or drink while using the mouth spray.

## The Gum:

Nicotine gum looks and feels like regular chewing gum but it should not be used the same way. When the gum is chewed, nicotine is released and absorbed through the cheek. Use the gum whenever you have the urge to smoke.

The gum can be used to quit completely or to help cut down the number of cigarettes smoked per day.

**How to Use:** Chew one piece of gum slowly until the taste becomes strong and then "park" it between your cheek and gum. Wait a minute or two until the taste has faded, and then repeat the process; "chew, park, chew". Do not eat or drink while using the gum. Do not use more than 20 pieces per day.

## The Inhaler:

The inhaler consists of a plastic mouthpiece and nicotine cartridges that deliver nicotine through the lining of the mouth. The inhaler can be used whenever you have the urge to smoke, and satisfies the hand to mouth motion for many people who smoke.

**How to Use:** Insert a nicotine cartridge into the mouthpiece and either take deep breaths or short puffs (as if smoking a cigar). One cartridge will last up to 20 minutes with constant puffing. Do not eat or drink while using the inhaler. Do not use more than 12 cartridges per day. Remember to clean the mouthpiece regularly.

## The Lozenge:

Nicotine lozenges are similar to cough drops but they should not be used the same way. When the lozenge is dissolved, nicotine is released and absorbed through the cheek. Use the lozenge whenever you have the urge to smoke.

**How to Use:** Place one lozenge between your cheek and gum and allow it to slowly dissolve. After a few minutes move it from one side of your mouth to the other; repeat until the lozenge is dissolved. Lozenges should not be chewed or swallowed. Do not eat or drink while using the lozenge. Do not use more than 15 lozenges per day.

# NRT Options

Here are the nicotine replacement therapy options available to help you quit smoking:



**patch**



**mouth spray**



**gum**



**inhaler**



**lozenge**

Depending on the amount you smoke, the patch, mouth spray, gum, inhaler, or lozenge be used alone, or in combination together.

You should not use NRT if you have...

- Had a recent heart attack or stroke
- Serious heart problems
- Jaw or mouth problems or wear dentures (for the gum only)
- Generalized skin disorders (patch only)
- Had severe side-effects from using NRT before
- An allergy to anything in the NRT

Using NRT is always safer than continuing to smoke.

NRT may be used as long as needed to remain smoke-free.

If you are taking any medications it is important to let your doctor know that you are quitting.

**For more information, contact:**

**The Quit Clinic**  
Middlesex-London Health Unit

**519-663-5317 ext. HELP (4357)**  
[thequitclinic@mlhu.on.ca](mailto:thequitclinic@mlhu.on.ca)

Adapted with permission from:  
 London Health Sciences Centre  
London Regional Cancer Program

# Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Information on the nicotine patch, mouth spray, gum, inhaler and lozenge.

