

Quit smoking medications can double your patient's chances of quitting for good.

There is no formula for discussing smoking cessation medications with your patient. However, having the discussion is critically important. It is an opportunity to prepare your patient for withdrawal by openly discussing the medications that may help reduce withdrawal symptoms as well as cigarette cravings, while enabling the patient to focus on behavioral changes.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products provide a clean form of nicotine without the harmful ingredients found in cigarettes. The cost of an 8-week course of NRT is similar to that of a pack-a-day smoker and substantially cheaper than continuing to smoke. However, the cost of NRT may concern many patients. Changes within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have broadened the agency's support of tobacco cessation, and your patient may obtain a smoking cessation medication when it's a prescribed drug. In addition, your patient may be able to obtain free NRT from your state's smoking cessation quit-line (1-800-QUIT-NOW); however, please note this may not be applicable to every state.

To assist your discussion with your patient about his/her medication plan, refer to the guide below, which highlights medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to help patients who are trying to quit smoking.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Method	Availability	Description
Nicotine Patches	Over-the-Counter ¹ NRT	The nicotine patch is placed on the skin and gives users a small and steady amount of nicotine.
Nicotine Gum	Over-the-Counter ¹ NRT	Nicotine gum is chewed to release nicotine. The user chews the gum until it produces a tingling feeling, and then places it between their cheek and gums.
Nicotine Lozenges	Over-the-Counter ¹ NRT	Nicotine lozenges look like hard candy and are placed in the mouth. The nicotine lozenge releases nicotine as it slowly dissolves in the mouth.
Nicotine Inhaler	Prescription NRT	A nicotine inhaler is a cartridge attached to a mouthpiece. Inhaling through the mouthpiece gives the user a specific amount of nicotine.
Nicotine Nasal Spray	Prescription NRT	Nicotine nasal spray is a pump bottle containing nicotine, which is put into the nose and sprayed.

Other Quit Smoking Medications

Method	Availability	Description
Bupropion	Prescription	Bupropion, also known as Zyban®, helps to reduce nicotine withdrawal and the urge to smoke. Bupropion can be used safely with NRT.
Varenicline	Prescription	Varenicline, also known as Chantix®, helps to reduce nicotine withdrawal and the urge to smoke. It also blocks the effects of nicotine from cigarettes if the user starts smoking again.

¹In Medicaid, prescriptions are required for all products, included those designated to be available over-the-counter by the Food and Drug Administration.