

Nicotine patches, gum and lozenges

Using nicotine patches, gum or lozenges is a great way to reduce cravings while you are quitting smoking. They are safe and won't damage your health. Using them for eight weeks can double your chances of successfully becoming a non-smoker.

Patches, gum and lozenges work by replacing some of the nicotine you usually get from smoking. Nicotine is what makes smoking addictive, but it doesn't damage your health like the other poisonous chemicals in cigarettes.

Research shows that patches, gum or lozenges work best if you use them continuously for eight weeks. Some people go back to smoking if they stop using patches, gum or lozenges too early.

How do I use nicotine patches?

- 1 Place patches on smooth, clean, dry skin (where no perfumes, cosmetics or lotions have been applied). Don't place them on hairy, cut or broken skin.
- 2 Press firmly in place with your palm and hold for 20 seconds. If your patch doesn't stick properly, talk to Quitline 0800 778 778. Don't cut the patches up.
- 3 Leave each patch on for 24 hours. Use a new patch on a new area of skin each day. Don't reuse old patches.
- 4 When you throw away used patches, make sure they are safely out of the reach of children and pets.

How do I use the nicotine gum or lozenges?

Nicotine gum and lozenges aren't like regular gum or lozenges. They taste different and need to be chewed or sucked differently.

- 1 Bite down 1–2 times on the gum or suck the lozenge just enough to release the hot, peppery taste in your mouth, then 'park' it between your gums and cheek.
- 2 Repeat this 5–6 times over a 30-minute period. It's important to use this technique with nicotine gum or lozenges, otherwise you might get hiccups or a sore stomach, and they won't work properly to reduce your cravings.

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How do I use the nicotine gum or lozenges? (continued)

- 3 Do not drink when using the gum or lozenge, or for up to 15 minutes afterwards.
- 4 The recommended dose is 8–12 pieces of gum or lozenges within a 24-hour period.
- 5 Throw away after about 30 minutes, and make sure they are safely out of the reach of children and pets.



Side Effects

Patches, gum and lozenges are very safe, and serious side effects are rare.

Sometimes patches cause sleeping difficulties or bad dreams. If you experience these, remove the patch before going to bed and put on a new one in the morning. Patches can also cause a slight reddening and itching of the skin. This is less likely if you place a new patch on a different area each day. Remember to apply the patch to clean, dry skin.

If you experience nausea it may be a sign that you are receiving too much nicotine and need a lower dose. Please call Quitline or talk to your pharmacist or the person who gave you this Quitcard about this.

Gum and lozenges might give you a slightly irritated mouth and throat and more saliva (spit) than usual. If you chew or suck the gum or lozenges too often, you might swallow too much nicotine and this can cause wind, hiccups and indigestion.