

AIDS TO STOPPING SMOKING

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY:

NRT is not a gimmick. Many studies have shown that NRT doubles the chance of success of smokers wishing to stop and helps control cravings for nicotine. It reduces withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety and irritability. NRT is not a magic cure and does not replace the need for willpower. For the best results NRT should be used in sufficient quantities and for long enough. You should follow the instructions in the package and seek further advice from the pharmacist. All the NRT products have similar success rates and cost roughly the same as 20 cigarettes. Nicotine replacement products are not addictive. However, some ex-smokers continue to use them for a year because of concern about returning to smoking. There are few side effects. NRT should not be used during pregnancy or for certain medical reasons.

Patch – discreet and easiest to start with

- It looks like a sticking plaster. Occasionally people get skin irritation from the adhesive.
- It is applied to dry non hairy skin each morning. Nicotine is absorbed at a slow constant rate.
- Most patches are designed to be worn for 24 hours and come in different doses.
- If you smoke 10 cigarettes a day or more you should normally start with the highest dose patch.

Gum – allows good control of nicotine dose

- The gum comes in 2mg or 4mg does and in original, mint and other flavours. Most people get used to the bitter taste within a week or so.
- It is important to chew slowly to get the most out of the gum because any nicotine that is swallowed is wasted. The nicotine has to be absorbed through the lining of the mouth.
- If you smoke more than 20 a day you should try the 4mg gum.

Spray for very addicted smokers.

- At the moment the nasal spray is only available on private prescription it consists of a small bottle of nicotine solution. When the top is pressed down it delivers a dose of nicotine in a spray.
- Nicotine is absorbed faster than from the patch, gum or inhalator. This can be better for heavier smokers or those who still get cravings with the other nicotine replacement products.
- Side effects include nasal irritation, sneezing and a runny nose.

Tablet – discreet and flexible, good control

- This is a small tablet, which you place under the tongue where it slowly dissolves to release the same amount of nicotine as in 2mg nicotine gum. You do not chew, suck or swallow it otherwise the nicotine does not get absorbed through the lining of the mouth.

ZYBAN:

Zyban (Or Bupropion HC1) is a non nicotine drug that can be prescribed by your doctor to help you quit smoking. Zyban should be used as part of a programme of smoking cessation that includes counselling, support and regular monitoring.

How does it work?

Zyban probably acts on the nicotine addiction pathways in the brain that drive people to keep smoking. The active ingredient in Zyban was used in an antidepressant medication, and the ability to help smoking cessation was a chance finding among Vietnam War Veterans in the USA.

What are the benefits?

- 2 clinical trials have suggested that Zyban is more effective than simple nicotine replacement therapy
- It has a higher success rate than nicotine patches and gum (nearly one in three do not relapse).
- If you are not at risk of seizures, Zyban is an extremely important new treatment for nicotine addiction. Smoking is the single greatest cause of premature death in Britain (120,000 deaths each year), and this treatment is clearly effective as an aid in helping smokers to quit.

What are the risks?

- Zyban is a very powerful drug and as with any such medication, care needs to be taken when using it. They are new guidelines about its use and possible risks.
- Zyban should only be used after a thorough consultation with your doctor, followed by check-ups after four and eight weeks.
- Zyban is associated with a risk of seizures, and it should not be used by anyone with a history of seizures or fits (such as people with epilepsy or after a stroke).
- Zyban is not advised during pregnancy or for people with:
 - Severe liver disease or heavy alcohol users
 - Some types of mental illness (bipolar disorder or taking MAO1)
 - A history of eating disorders (bulimia and anorexia nervosa).
- If you are already on medication, you should always check with your doctor before taking it

What are the side effects?

- Zyban causes a dry mouth due to a reduced saliva flow. This can result in discomfort with speech and eating, an increased risk of tooth decay and difficulty with tooth cleaning.
- Even in healthy people Zyban can unpleasant side effects such as headaches and sleeplessness.

E-cigarettes (vaping)

E-cigarettes can have a role in helping people quit smoking. They are considered to be far less harmful than cigarettes. There are many unknowns about the long-term health risks, including the risks to your oral health, so should not be considered 'safe'.