



# Pharmacy Pearls

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## Smoking cessation treatment options

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### General Recommendations:

- Combination of long-acting and short-acting NRT or varenicline alone is more efficacious than single NRT or bupropion
- Varenicline can be used in combination with nicotine patch; typically tried if initial single therapy is ineffective
- Choice can be patient preference between first-line therapies as long as no contraindications
  - Behavioral support and counseling are encouraged for all patients and in combination with medication

### First-Line Treatment Options

Drug	Dose	Administration	Side effects and Clinical Pearls
<b>Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)</b>			
Nicotine patch	Step 1: 21 mg (for >10 cig/day) Step 2: 14 mg (for ≤10 cig/day) Step 3: 7 mg (not for initiation)	Apply 1 new patch daily for 6 weeks, then proceed to next step down in dose for 2 weeks (then third step for 2 weeks if applicable)	<b>Side effects:</b> Skin irritation, insomnia, vivid dreams <b>Pearls:</b> May start before quit date, rotate sites, if removed before bedtime it takes 30 mins to 3 hours after re-application to reach effectiveness
Nicotine gum	2 mg if first cigarette ≥ 30 minutes after waking 4 mg if first cigarette <30 minutes after waking	Weeks 1-6: chew 1 piece every 1-2 hrs Weeks 7-9: chew 1 piece every 2-4 hrs Weeks 10-12: chew 1 piece every 4-8 hrs <i>Max: 24 pieces/day</i>	<b>Side effects:</b> Mouth irritation, jaw soreness, heartburn, hiccups, or nausea (gastrointestinal side effects usually due to overly vigorous chewing) <b>Pearls:</b> Use "chew and park" method, no food or drink for 30 minutes before or during use
Nicotine lozenge	2 mg if first cigarette ≥30 minutes after waking 4 mg if first cigarette <30 minutes after waking	Weeks 1-6: 1 lozenge every 1-2 hrs Weeks 7-9: 1 lozenge every 2-4 hrs Weeks 10-12: 1 lozenge every 4-8 hrs <i>Max: 5 lozenges/6 hours or 20 lozenges/day</i>	<b>Side effects:</b> Mouth irritation, hiccups, heartburn, nausea <b>Pearls:</b> No food or drink for 30 minutes before or during use
Nicotine inhaler <sup>^</sup>	10 mg per cartridge	Inhale as needed (i.e. every 1 to 2 hours) <i>Max: 16 cartridges/day</i>	<b>Side effects:</b> Mouth and throat irritation
Nicotine nasal spray <sup>^</sup>	0.5 mg/spray (10 mg/mL)	Apply 1 spray to each nostril every 1-2 hours as needed <i>Max: 10 sprays/hour or 80 sprays/day</i>	<b>Side effects:</b> Nasal and throat irritation, rhinitis, sneezing, cough, or teary eyes
<b>Other first-line options</b>			
Varenicline <sup>^</sup>	0.5 mg tab to start, then titrate up to 1 mg tab (Dose reduce if CrCl <30 mL/min)	0.5 mg/day for 3 days, then 0.5 mg twice a day for 4 days, then 1 mg twice a day	<b>Side effects:</b> Nausea, insomnia, abnormal (vivid, unusual, or strange) dreams, headache, skin rash (≤3%) <b>Pearls:</b> Start 1-2 weeks before quit date, may be started up to 5 weeks prior to quit date*
Bupropion <sup>^</sup>	150 mg SR tab	150 mg/day for 3 days, then 150 mg twice daily	<b>Side effects:</b> Insomnia, agitation, dry mouth, headache <b>Pearls:</b> Start 1-2 weeks before quit date*

<sup>^</sup>Available by prescription only

\*Abruptly quitting smoking is preferred but gradual smoking reduction is an alternative (50% by week 4, another 50% by week 8, quit by week 12)

### Limited or unproven benefit:

- Clonidine
- SSRIs
- E-cigarettes

### Special Population Considerations:

- Seizures: Bupropion contraindicated
- Pregnancy: Use behavioral interventions; education alone is ineffective
- Less committed to quitting: Varenicline > NRT