



Medications Can Help You Quit Tobacco

Quitting tobacco is one of the best things you can do for your health.

A safe and effective part of a complete quit plan includes medications like:

- Varenicline (Chantix)
- Nicotine patch
- Nicotine gum
- Nicotine lozenges
- Bupropion (Wellbutrin)

When used correctly, these can reduce the cravings and discomfort you might experience while you stop tobacco.

When people use tobacco, their bodies become used to nicotine and start to rely on it to function normally. The role of quit tobacco medications is to reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms so you can focus on making the changes needed to live well without tobacco.

What are nicotine withdrawal symptoms?

These are feelings of discomfort that can occur with quitting tobacco. They can last a few days to a few weeks and can include irritability, lack of focus, depression or anxiety, sleep disturbance, restlessness, increased appetite or hunger, and cravings or urges to smoke.

Isn't nicotine the harmful part of tobacco?

Nicotine is the addictive element of tobacco. Your body becomes dependent on nicotine to feel normal. However, most of the health-related problems of tobacco use (cancer, breathing, or heart problems) come from being exposed to tobacco and tobacco smoke, not nicotine.

Will I become addicted to these medications?

Quit medications have a much lower risk of addiction than tobacco. They're safe and are usually used for about 2 to 3 months. Some people stay on the medications longer if they continue to experience cravings and withdrawal.



People who take medications are 2 times more likely to quit.

Medication	Directions	Is it right for me?
Varenicline (Chantix)	Take 1 week prior to quit date. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Days 1–3: Take 0.5 mg/day. • Days 4–7: Take 0.5 mg twice/day (morning and evening). • Days 8–end: Take 1 mg twice/day. 	If you have a renal impairment or a psychiatric or seizure disorder, it's important to discuss with your doctor before using.
Nicotine patch, gum, and lozenge	Put a new patch on your upper body every day. Don't use the same place more than once every 7 days. Chew gum until peppery taste or tingle emerges. Place gum between cheek and your gums until it loses the tingle. Repeat until tingle disappears. Place lozenge in mouth. Allow to dissolve slowly. Don't chew.	Don't use nicotine replacement (patch, gum, lozenge) if you had a recent heart attack or have an irregular heartbeat or chest pain. If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, discuss with your doctor before using nicotine replacement. The patch may not be right for people with skin disorders (eczema, rash). Gum may not be right for people with jaw problems (TMD).
Bupropion (Wellbutrin/Zyban)	Start 1 week before quit date, then continue to take for 7 to 12 weeks daily.	Don't use if you have a history of or are at risk for seizures. See product label for more information.

Is there anything I can do about withdrawal without medications?

Withdrawal symptoms go away in time. Whether you use medication or not, it's helpful to have a plan to manage challenging moments without using tobacco. Replace tobacco with something healthy:

- Make your smoke break a short walk.
- Chew celery or a straw.
- Breathe deeply to relax—without the smoke.
- Find support through friends, family, or communities of quitters.

Are medications covered by my health insurance?

With a doctor's prescription, most over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies and oral medication are available at no cost to most of our members. If you have questions about your coverage, please call the Member Services Contact Center at 1-800-464-4000 or visit kp.org/costsandcoverage.

We're here to help

Make a phone appointment with a wellness coach for help making—and sticking with—a plan to quit tobacco. To learn more about practical strategies and tips, visit these resources:



Wellness coaching:
kpdoc/wellnesscoaching
866-251-4514



Quitting tobacco:
kpdoc.org/quittingtobacco



This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other medical professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only. Some photos may include models and not actual patients.