

Smoking Cessation Medications

This chart provides general guidelines on use of cessation medications, but you should always follow the instructions in the product package, which might be slightly different in some cases. All medications below have been shown to help smokers quit.

Type	Available without prescription?	How used	Benefits	Dosage	Drawbacks
Nicotine gum	Yes	Chew briefly until you notice a peppery taste or tingle, then hold inside cheek. After the taste or tingle fades, chew again. Repeat this for 20 to 30 minutes. Nicotine is absorbed through the mouth lining.	Convenient and flexible. It delivers nicotine more quickly than a patch. The gum can be used on a schedule of 1 or 2 pieces every hour or as you need it for nicotine cravings.	Begin with 2- or 4-mg strength, and use no more than 24 pieces a day. Taper dose before stopping. Use for 1 to 3 months – and no longer than 6 months	You can't eat or drink for 15 minutes before using or while chewing the gum. If you have dental/jaw problems, talk with your dentist. The product may cause throat irritation and a bad taste in the mouth.
Nicotine patch	Yes, for some brands	Apply to skin each day per package directions. The patch releases a steady dose of nicotine through the skin	It is very easy to use.	Most smokers begin with a full-strength (15-22 mg) patch each day for 4 weeks and then taper to a weaker patch (5-14 mg). Use for a total of 3 to 5 months. It is available as a 16- or 24-hour patch.	The patch releases nicotine more slowly than other systems. It may cause skin irritation, muscle aches, sleep problems, dizziness, nausea, headache, racing heartbeat, and vivid dreams.
Nicotine lozenges	Yes	Suck on 1 lozenge until fully dissolved; do not bite or chew. Use 1 every 1 to 2 hours for 6 weeks, then 1 every 2 to 4 hours for 3 weeks, then 1 every 4 to 8 hours for 3 weeks.	Convenient and easy to use. It delivers nicotine quickly through the lining of the mouth.	Comes in 2- and 4-mg strengths. Dose is based on how long after waking up you normally have the first cigarette of the day. Do not use more than 20 in 1 day. Do not smoke while using lozenges.	You can't eat or drink for 15 minutes before or while using a lozenge. It may cause nausea, gas, hiccups, heartburn, coughing, headache, and trouble sleeping.

Type	Available without prescription?	How used	Benefits	Dosage	Drawbacks
Bupropion hydrochloride (Zyban)	No	Start taking 1 to 2 weeks before quitting. If you quit smoking after 7 to 12 weeks, your doctor may have you keep taking it for some time afterward.	Easy to use. It may be more helpful when used along with nicotine replacement therapy.	For the first 3 days, take 1 pill a day, and then you may increase to 1 pill in the morning and 1 in the late afternoon	Do not use if you have a seizure or an eating disorder, are taking Wellbutrin or MAO inhibitors, or are a heavy alcohol drinker. It may cause dry mouth, trouble sleeping, tiredness, indigestion, headaches, and mood changes, including depression or (rarely) suicidal thoughts.
Varenicline (Chantix)	No	Taken as a pill, once or twice a day. Start taking 1 to 2 weeks before your quit date.	Lessens pleasure from smoking. It reduces symptoms of withdrawal.	Dosage increases slowly during the first week. Starting on day 8, take the full dose for up to 12 weeks. Those who quit smoking may use another 12 weeks to boost their chance of staying quit.	It may cause nausea, gas, headache, trouble sleeping, unusual dreams, taste changes, and mood or behavior changes. More serious side effects may include seizures and thoughts of suicide.

A note about electronic cigarettes and ENDS – Scientific studies have been mixed regarding the effectiveness of adults using e-cigarettes to quit smoking. Some studies have found e-cigarettes can help adults quit smoking. Other studies have found little effect or that using e-cigarettes may even interfere with quitting. Smoking cessation using e-cigarettes in adolescents and young adults has not been studied. The American Cancer Society cannot recommend e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) products to help people quit smoking because none are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as cessation aids, and it isn't yet known if they are safe and effective. There are proven methods available to help people quit, including pure forms of inhalable nicotine, as well as nasal sprays, gums, lozenges, and patches. These FDA approved methods are listed in the above chart.



Type	Discount available?	Eligibility requirements	Details of discount
Nicotine gum	Yes.	Participant/dependent must be covered under Carpenters Health Plan. Prescription required to take advantage of discount.	Carpenters Health Plan will cover over-the-counter smoking cessation aids for 180 days within a 365-day period. A prescription is required for coverage through Express Scripts. Discount valid at Carpenters Wellness Center and outside In-Network pharmacies. Standard copay will apply after 180 days.
Nicotine patch	No out-of-pocket charge with prescription from referring physician.		
Nicotine lozenges			
Bupropion hydrochloride (Zyban)	Yes.	Participant/dependent must be covered under Carpenters Health Plan. Prescription required.	Carpenters Health Plan will cover these prescription smoking cessation aids for 180 days within a 365-day period. A prescription is required for coverage through Express Scripts. Discount valid at Carpenters Wellness Center and outside In-Network pharmacies. Standard copay will apply after 180 days.
Varenicline (Chantix)	No out-of-pocket charge with prescription from referring physician.		
Telephone quitline	No.	This resource is not currently available.	None.
Web-based support	Yes. No cost.	Participant/dependent must be covered under Carpenters Health Plan. Available to dependents 18 and older.	With Pelago virtual clinic , you have access to virtual services for quitting tobacco use. The online support is personalized for you to help you overcome your barriers and achieve your goals. Visit pelago.health/carpenters for more information or to sign up.
One-on-one coaching	No.	This resource is available through Carpenters Wellness Center health coach and Pelago tobacco cessation coaches.	Coverage for health coaching includes lifestyle management coaching at no cost to the participant/dependent age 18 or older. Call the wellness center at 314.955.9355. Call Pelago Member Support at 1.877.349.7755 or visit Pelago online at pelago.health/carpenters to enroll in tobacco cessation coaching.