TOBACCO CESSATION MEDICATIONS WORK BEST FOR THOSE WHO ARE:

- Motivated and have a sincere desire to quit
- Developing strategies to change routines and behaviors to make quitting easier
- Working with a coach, counselor or provider to support quit efforts

The three most commonly used tobacco cessation medications are: Chantix, Wellbutrin and Nicotine Replacement Therapy.

**WHY**
Tobacco Cessation medications can help with your cravings and withdrawal symptoms and can help you to maintain your tobacco-free status after you have quit.

**WHAT**
*Chantix* works in the brain as a nicotine inhibitor which means that your body does not release as much dopamine when you use tobacco. This helps to reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms and also causes you to experience less pleasure even if you use tobacco while taking Chantix. If Chantix is not available at your CareHere Clinic your provider can write you a prescription. Chantix may be too expensive for some, so be sure to check with your prescription plan concerning copays.

**WHO**
Chantix is not recommended for anyone under 18, pregnant or with certain mental health or medical conditions. Those requiring a DOT physical for their occupation cannot take Chantix. Your provider will help you determine if you are an appropriate candidate for Chantix.

**HOW**
Begin Chantix one week before your set quit day. You will begin with a ½ mg dose once a day for days 1-3, then twice a day for days 4-7. You will then increase to 1 mg twice a day at or around quit day. Your provider will help you understand how to take Chantix. Chantix is typically taken for 3 months but can be taken for up to 6 months.

**POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS**
- Research suggests that negative side effects impact about 10% of those who take Chantix.
- Vivid, strange or distressing dreams, trouble sleeping or increased sleepiness
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal issues; nausea, gas, constipation or vomiting
- Changes in mood or behavior; talk to your provider right away if you experience increased anger, agitation, depressed mood, or suicidal ideation or attempt.

Special note: This medication can be linked to increased risk of heart attack or stroke. Patients are also cautioned to avoid alcohol as Chantix can speed or increase impairment.
**WHAT**

**WELLBUTRIN/ZYBAN** (Bupropion) can help decrease your cravings for tobacco and is carried at your CareHere Clinic at no cost to you. This medication is used for those with depression but can help you quit tobacco even if you do not suffer with depression. For some, it can also help to offset weight gain while quitting.

**WHO**

Bupropion is not recommended for anyone under 18, pregnant or with certain medical conditions; specifically those with a seizure or eating disorder. Your provider will help you determine if you are an appropriate candidate for Bupropion.

**HOW**

- Start taking Bupropion 1-2 weeks before your set quit day.
- Typically you will take it once a day for the first 3-4 days, then twice a day thereafter. You can take Bupropion as long as you are receiving support to remain tobacco free; typically 12-24 weeks but up to a year.
- You can also take Bupropion in combination with a Nicotine Replacement Therapy after you quit. Talk to your doctor about if this is a good option for you.

**POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS**

- Insomnia or trouble sleeping; if this is the case take your medication earlier in the afternoon but at least 8 hours after your first dose
- Dry mouth
- Changes in mood or behavior; talk to your provider right away if you experience increased anger, agitation, depressed mood, or suicidal thoughts or attempt.

**WHAT**

**NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (NRT)** curbs withdrawal symptoms if used correctly. While the patch delivers a steady long release dose of nicotine it can be combined with a short release form of NRT to help with breakthrough cravings. It can also be used in combination with Bupropion for additional support.

There are 5 different types of NRT:

- Short release: gum, lozenges, inhaler, nasal spray
- Long release: transdermal patch

Most CareHere Clinics do not currently carry Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) but your provider can write you a prescription or you can obtain the Nicotine Patch, Gum or Lozenges over the counter. Nicotine Nasal Spray or Nicotine Inhaler are only available with a prescription.

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WHAT

An important consideration before choosing NRT is whether or not your employer requires a (cotinine) test to measure nicotine in the body when an incentive is in place for employees to be tobacco free. It is not possible to tell from this particular test if nicotine entered the bloodstream via Nicotine Replacement Therapy or a tobacco product. There is an alternative test that measures the biomarker anabasine that can confirm tobacco abstinence. However, this test may not be available from your employee clinic. It would also be important to produce documentation of provider prescribed NRT, if this test were to be requested and approved.

Tips to use NRT successfully:
- Do not cheat on quit day or your first day using NRT; your chances of quitting for life are 10 times greater if you do not.
- Speak with your provider about the correct way to use NRT.
- Stay connected with your health coach; success is greater while combining your medication with coaching or a behavioral change program.

Some consider E-cigarettes or vaping as a type of NRT; however, the research is still unavailable concerning the potential long term health risks involved with E-cigarettes. It is generally accepted that inhaling any type of vapor into the lungs carries inherent health risks, thus CareHere does not recommend vaping as a “safe” alternative to tobacco use.

WHO

Talk to your provider about which NRT is right for you. If you smoke less than ten cigarettes per day, start at the lower dose (14 mg) patch or lower dose (2 mg) gum/lozenge.

It is unclear if NRT is safe for pregnant women as an unborn child can be at risk for increased heart rate. However, if you feel you cannot quit without medication support please discuss NRT further with your provider, as quitting tobacco is very important for your health and the health of your unborn child.

HOW

It is recommended that you start NRT on quit day, however, newer research suggests that beginning NRT up to two weeks before your set quit day can be beneficial. Speak to your provider and follow prescribing instructions carefully concerning your chosen NRT method.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS
- Skin irritation at the patch application site; change location of the patch regularly
- Upset stomach with NRT Gum and Lozenge (follow usage instructions carefully)
- Headaches
- Trouble falling asleep; most commonly experienced with the patch but typically resolves after a few days. If the problem persists, the patch can be removed during sleep.
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RESOURCES


George TP. Nicotine and Tobacco. In: Goldman L, Schafer AI, eds. Cecil Medicine


Singh S, Loke YK, Spangler JG, Furberg CD. Risk of Serious Adverse Cardiovascular Events Associated with Varenicline: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. CMAJ
