

Nicorette patches for quitting tobacco

About nicotine patches

Nicotine patches allow nicotine to be absorbed through the skin. The patch provides a continual level of nicotine throughout the day. The level is less than from cigarettes, but is usually enough to reduce craving and nicotine withdrawal.

It is very important that you quit using tobacco before you begin to use a nicotine patch. Do not use tobacco as long as you are using the patch. If you do use tobacco during this time, you could overdose on nicotine.

We believe nicotine patches work best when used with a program that teaches you to change habits so you can live without nicotine. The Quit For Life® Program helps patients learn these skills.

To contact Quit For Life, call toll-free 1-800-462-5327

How to use nicotine patches

1. Apply the nicotine patch daily at the same time each day. Choose a different place on your skin to apply the next patch. Do not use the same skin site for at least one week.
2. Choose a non-hairy, clean, dry area on the upper, outer part of your arm. Do not put the patch on skin that is oily, burned, broken out, cut, or irritated.
3. Press the nicotine patch firmly onto your skin for about 10 seconds. Make sure it sticks well.
4. You might feel mild itching, burning, or tingling at first, but this is normal and usually goes away within an hour.
5. Water will not harm the patch. You can shower or bathe as usual.
6. Avoid using perfumed soaps or skin lotions, which can make the skin oily and cause the patch to fall off.
7. Wash your hands well after each application and removal of the patch.
8. Dispose of the patch by folding it in half and placing it into the plastic holder. Keep the patch out of reach of children and pets.
9. If you're having trouble sleeping, it may indicate you are getting too much nicotine. Notify the Quit For Life® Program if this happens.
10. Don't use tobacco while using a nicotine patch. Using tobacco while using a patch can cause nicotine overdose.

Signs of overdose

Stop using the patch immediately and contact the Quit For Life® Program if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Nausea ☐
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Bad headache
- Cold sweats
- Blurred vision
- Increased saliva
- Tremor
- Rapid or irregular heart beat
- Chest pain
- Confusion

Common side effects

The most common side effects from using nicotine patches include skin irritation, itching, problems sleeping, strange or disturbing dreams, diarrhea, and indigestion. Most of these symptoms will go away over time.

It is normal to feel some tingling or mild burning when the patch is first applied. This usually goes away in an hour. After removing the patch, the skin underneath may be red for a day or so. If this lasts longer than a couple of days, or the skin becomes swollen, contact the Quit For Life® Program. You may be experiencing an allergic reaction. Dose adjustments might be needed if you have side effects.

Precautions

Some conditions require special precautions. Be sure to let the Quit For Life® Program know if you have any of the following:

- A recent heart attack (myocardial infarction) ☐
- Heart pain (angina pectoris) ☐
- Irregular heart beat (arrhythmia)
- Pregnant or trying to get pregnant ☐
- Stomach ulcers ☐
- Overactive thyroid ☐
- Rashes from adhesive tape or bandages
- Allergies to certain drugs
- High blood pressure
- Skin diseases
- Diabetes requiring insulin
- Kidney or liver disease

If you need to have magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) while you're using nicotine patches, tell a member of your health care team before you have the test. The MRI might cause a slight burn to the skin at the patch site.

The information presented in this pamphlet is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care.