

# Varenicline (Chantix) for quitting tobacco

## About varenicline

Varenicline is a prescription medication used to help people stop smoking. Varenicline doesn't contain nicotine, but can help reduce withdrawal symptoms to help people overcome the need to use tobacco. We believe varenicline works 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

## What you should tell your doctor before starting varenicline

Before starting varenicline, make sure your doctor knows if you:

- Are pregnant, breastfeeding, or thinking about becoming pregnant.
- Have or have had schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or other mental illness.
- Have or have had problems with major depression.
- Have or have had kidney problems.
- Have 2 or more alcoholic drinks every day.

## How to use varenicline

- You need to take varenicline for a full week before quitting tobacco.
  - Most people start varenicline slowly, by taking a low-dose pill for 1 week and then switching to a high-dose pill. This will help reduce risk for side effects.
  - You will take a low-dose white pill each day for the first 3 days. Then you'll take it 2 times a day for 4 more days. After 7 days, you'll start taking a higher dose blue pill. Most people will take the blue pill 2 times a day for 12 weeks.
  - Varenicline can upset your stomach. To help with this, take your pill with food
  - If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible unless you're close to your next dose. If you're close to your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue on your normal dosage schedule.
- Don't take a double dose.**
- Take varenicline for 12 weeks. After a month, you may feel that you don't need the medication any more. Studies show that people who quit taking varenicline before 12 weeks are less likely to still be tobacco free a year later.

## Common side effects

The most common side effect of varenicline is nausea. It's usually mild and goes away after a few days. Other common side effects include:

- Bad or vivid dreams
- Problems sleeping
- Constipation
- Gas

## Precautions

- Contact your doctor if you experience signs or symptoms of depression, suicidal thoughts, nervousness, emotional ups and downs, abnormal thinking, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.
- Varenicline may cause drowsiness. Use caution when driving or operating machinery.

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