Nicotine Patch

The nicotine patch is a quit medication that you can get from your local drug or grocery store. The patch sticks to your skin like a band-aid that gives you a steady dosage of nicotine through your skin all day long. The patch is safe, and it does not have any of the other toxins that are in tobacco smoke. Research shows it doubles your chances of quitting. It does not require a doctor’s prescription.

Benefits of the Nicotine Patch

• Reduces symptoms of nicotine withdrawal that can include headaches, irritability, and cravings to use tobacco.
• Easy to use
• One patch gives you a steady dose of nicotine the whole day.
• Can be combined with the nicotine gum, lozenge, inhaler, or nasal spray to help reduce nicotine withdrawal. This can make it easier to stay quit.
• Comes in different strengths depending on how much you smoke or chew.

How to use it

• Put on the first patch on the morning of your first day without smoking (your Quit Date).
• Place the patch above your waist, but below your neck. Press it in place and hold it firmly for 10 to 20 seconds.
• Every morning, take off the patch from the day before and put on a new patch.
• Do not put the patch in the exact same spot for at least 7 days. (If you do, the nicotine in the patch can irritate your skin.)
• Most people use the patch for about 8 weeks. You can use it longer if you feel a need to.

How much should I use per day?

You should use only one nicotine patch per day. They come in 3 strengths:

• 21mg for those who smoke 11 or more cigarettes per day
• 14mg for those who smoke more than 5 but less than 11 cigarettes per day
• 7mg for those who smoke less than 5 cigarettes per day

Before using the Nicotine Patch, let your doctor know if you:

• Have had a heart attack in the last 2 weeks.
• Have had a stroke or TIA in the last 2 weeks.
• Have a severe heart rhythm problem or a very fast heartbeat.
• Have worsening angina or heart/chest pain.
• Are pregnant or are actively trying to get pregnant.
• Are allergic to or have had serious skin irritation from using adhesives (like band-aids) on your skin.
Cost
A nicotine patch costs less per day than a pack of cigarettes! Remember to check with your employer or health plan to see if they pay for all or part of the patch.

Common minor side effects: most of these go away after using the Nicotine Patch for a few days.
- Patches may make your skin itch or turn red where you put the patch on. If you have this problem, many people report that rubbing in hydrocortisone cream very well and wiping off any excess before applying the patch helps reduce skin irritation. Please talk to your local pharmacist or your healthcare provider to decide if this is right for you.
- Some people have bad dreams or trouble sleeping when they go to bed with the patch on. If you have bad dreams try taking the patch off one hour before bedtime.
- If you have a minor headache or upset stomach that does not go away after a few days of starting the patch, contact us. We can help you figure out why this is happening.

If you experience any of the following symptoms when using the Nicotine Patch, please contact your local pharmacist or your healthcare provider.
- Rash that extends beyond where the patch is on your body
- Moderate to severe headache
- Moderate to severe nausea or vomiting
- Severe headache
- Irregular heartbeat or palpitations
- Severe dizziness

If you experience swelling of the throat or mouth with difficulty breathing, remove the patch and seek immediate medical assistance. This may be a very rare, but very serious allergic reaction to something in the patch.

If you would like more information about the Nicotine Patch, call a Quit Coach at 1-866-QUIT-4-LIFE (784-8454).