

Using nicotine products to cut down then quit

You can use nicotine lozenges, mini lozenges, mouth spray (brand name QuickMist), the inhalator, or gum to cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke over six months before stopping completely.*

This method is recommended for smokers who are not ready or unable to quit.^{1,2} If you feel this way, using this method together with regularly talking with a support service doubles your chance of quitting in the long term.^{3,4} The aim of this method is to eventually stop smoking completely as there is no clear evidence that simply cutting down, without actually quitting, has any health benefits in the long term.^{1,5}

What is the process?

There are four steps:

1. Over the first six weeks, you cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke per day by half. You do this by replacing cigarettes with either the nicotine lozenge, mini lozenge, mouth spray, gum or the inhalator. Do not use more than the maximum number of doses per day stated on the nicotine product pack.⁶⁻¹¹
2. Somewhere between six weeks to six months (preferably as soon as possible), you stop smoking cigarettes altogether.⁶ If you haven't stopped smoking by six months you should speak to your doctor or pharmacist.⁶
3. After you stop smoking completely, you can continue to use your chosen nicotine replacement product in the same way as people who have just stopped smoking suddenly.^{7,10} This means using the inhalator or one piece of gum every one to two hours for 12 weeks, or for six weeks if using the lozenge, or mouth spray. Over another few weeks you gradually reduce the number of doses per day and then stop use. Read the instructions on the pack or the Consumer Medicine Information that comes with your product for details.
4. By 12 months, you should have stopped using your chosen nicotine replacement therapy product.⁶ If you haven't, speak to your doctor for further advice.

* The nicotine patch has not been approved for use while smoking for a period longer than two weeks. For more detail see *Fact sheet: Nicotine patches*.

Remember: the Quitline (Ph: 13 7848) can offer you advice and support on cutting down and when you want to stop completely.

Is it safe to smoke and use nicotine products?

Smoking while using the nicotine lozenge, mouth spray, inhalator, or gum does not increase health risks compared to smoking alone. If you reduce your smoking while using any of these products, your nicotine blood levels are likely to be no higher than when you were just smoking.^{1, 12}

There have been no reports of serious side effects from using these nicotine replacement therapy products while smoking in studies.^{1, 12} However, some people may have mild symptoms such as sore mouth or throat, and a few people may possibly experience nausea or vomiting.¹

Serious side effects from using nicotine replacement therapy products are rare.¹³ They are described in the Consumer Medicine Information (pack insert) that comes with the product.^{10, 14} If you have these symptoms, follow the instructions in the leaflet and see a doctor as soon as possible. These symptoms can occur from absorbing too much nicotine, so do not smoke.

Who can I talk to for more information?

- Your doctor is an important source of information, particularly if you have an illness, or you are taking any other medicines.
- Your pharmacist can give you advice about stopping smoking.
- Quitline 13 7848: Quitline advisors can help you with support, advice, information and a variety of resources, whether you have already quit or are just thinking about it.

Online resources

The **Quit website** www.quit.org.au provides a range of information that you can read, interact with and download. You can find out more about the Quitline, QuitCoach and QuitTxt.

The **QuitCoach** is a free interactive website that asks you a series of questions about your smoking, and then gives you advice about quitting which is tailored to your situation. To find out more go to www.quitcoach.org.au.

QuitTxt provides regular SMS messages including tips and encouragement to help you keep on track throughout your quit attempt. To begin, all you need to do is register and complete a brief questionnaire at www.quit.org.au/quittxt.

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