

General Information

Smokers smoke to obtain nicotine. When you give up smoking your body misses the nicotine. NRT helps you give up by replacing some of the nicotine, so that you can stop smoking without getting such strong withdrawal symptoms.

However it's the other toxins in cigarette smoke, such as tar, lead, cyanide and ammonia that cause smoking related disease and death. The benefits of stopping smoking are very clear, but without support it can be very hard. The risks of continuing to smoke are far more than any potential risk from using nicotine from NRT.

Taking other medicines

Smoking can affect the blood levels of some medicines, and so when you stop smoking, these levels might change. There are very few medicines where this is important.

If you are unsure about any medicine you are taking, talk to your pharmacist, smoking cessation nurse or doctor.

Getting rid of your NRT products

In small children high doses of nicotine are dangerous and can be fatal. For these reasons products containing nicotine should be kept out of the reach and sight of children at all times. All NRT products should be disposed of with care. Used patches should be folded in half with the adhesive side innermost and disposed of with care.

If you are a young person with younger brothers or sisters, do not leave your NRT products lying around where they may get hold of them.

If you have any questions about stopping smoking or about NRT products, then please speak to your healthcare professional or phone the national Quitline on

0800 00 22 00

Remember – don't delay quitting. Stopping smoking will bring great health benefits, and using NRT can greatly increase your chances of quitting successfully.

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Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Pregnant and breastfeeding women

People with heart disease or stroke

People with diabetes

People with serious kidney and liver problems

Young people aged 12 to 17

To help you stop smoking

To help you stop smoking

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Your pharmacist, doctor or healthcare professional will have given this leaflet to you, because you are going to give up smoking using NRT. It contains important information for you in addition to the patient information leaflet that comes with the product.

This information is new advice which updates current leaflets. It is important that you read all the information provided in your current leaflet alongside this leaflet, until all the individual pack leaflets are fully updated.

Not all of the following information in this leaflet will apply to you. Please follow the table below, which will tell you which section you need to read. Then read the general information at the end of the leaflet as this applies to everyone.

Customer Group	Section
Women who are pregnant	1
Women who are breastfeeding	2
People with diabetes	3
People with heart disease or stroke	4
People with serious kidney or liver problems	5
Young people (12 to 17 years)	6

1 Women who are pregnant

Stopping smoking is possibly the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and that of your unborn baby. It should be done as early as possible in pregnancy, because smoking during pregnancy can result in poor growth of your baby. It can also lead to premature births and even stillbirths.

Ideally you should try to give up smoking without the use of NRT but if you can't manage this, you can use NRT. The risks to your unborn baby are far less than from continuing to smoke. If you have sickness or nausea NRT patches may be preferable to gum, lozenges, tablets or inhalers.

2 Women who are breastfeeding

Second hand tobacco smoke produces breathing difficulties and other problems in babies and children. Nicotine from smoking and from NRT is found in breast milk. However the amount of nicotine from NRT that your child may receive during breastfeeding is much smaller and less harmful than the second hand smoke they would breathe in if you continue to smoke.

If you are breastfeeding it is better if you use gums, lozenges or inhalers rather than patches and avoid their use just before breastfeeding. If you have a partner or other family member who also smoke, try to encourage them to give up smoking with you.

3 People with diabetes

Smokers who have diabetes have a much higher risk of heart disease, so it is very important to stop smoking. Nicotine from smoking and from NRT affects your blood sugar levels, so when you stop smoking these can vary more than usual. Therefore, monitor your sugar more regularly than usual, as you may need to make changes to your diet, your insulin or the amount of medication you take.

4 People with heart disease or stroke

If you have been in hospital because you have had a heart attack, stroke or serious problem with irregular heartbeats, you will have been encouraged to give up smoking without using NRT. Now that you are well enough to leave hospital you can use NRT to help you stop smoking. You should tell your doctor that you are going to use NRT, and follow his/her advice.

5 People with serious kidney or liver problems

If your doctor has told you that your kidney or liver is not working properly, consult your doctor before starting to use NRT to help you stop smoking.

6 Young people (12 to 17 years)

For many young people smoking is already a habit. If you are smoking every day it may not be possible to quit without some help, so NRT can be helpful. You can use NRT for up to 12 weeks. Before you think about using NRT for longer you should talk to a healthcare professional e.g. a pharmacist, smoking cessation nurse or doctor.

To help you stop smoking

To help you stop smoking