

Summary

Smoking is harmful to our health. It causes cancer, lung disease and heart disease. People with mental health problems die 15 to 20 years earlier than others in the UK. The main reason for this is smoking.

Quitting smoking is the single most important way to improve your health and wellbeing.

Using a smoking cessation medication such as varenicline and behavioural support is the best way to quit smoking.

This leaflet contains information about Varenicline.

For more information

Speak to staff in your care team or ask to see a smoking cessation specialist.

Our email and webpage are here:
smokefreeready@slam.nhs.uk
www.slam.nhs.uk/smokefree

Why are we smoke free?

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust has a duty to promote health and wellbeing.

Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of early death.

We also have to comply with the Health Act (2006) and with NICE guidance on smoking (2013).

Our staff have been trained to deliver the best treatments for managing nicotine dependence.

Being smoke free means all patients benefit from improved health and wellbeing. Anyone who stops smoking might find that their medication works better and they can reduce their dose.

Ask if you need a large print, audio, Braille or translated version of this leaflet.

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www.slam.nhs.uk

**Stop smoking
medication**

Nicotine gum



www.slam.nhs.uk/smokefree

What is nicotine gum?

Nicotine gum is also known as NRT gum or nicotine replacement therapy gum.

It is a hard gum that contains 2mg or 4mg of nicotine in each piece.

Nicotine gum replaces some of the nicotine you would get from a cigarette. You may still get cravings but the gum takes the edge off.

Using nicotine gum can help reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms such as restlessness, low mood, or poor concentration.

Is nicotine gum safe?

The smoke produced from burning tobacco contains about 4,000 ingredients. 70 of these are known to cause cancer.

Since nicotine gum does not contain tobacco and is not burnt it is much safer than cigarettes.

Are there any side effects?

Some people have reported a sore mouth or throat, jaw-muscle ache, stomach discomfort, hiccups, nausea and headache.

Reduce your use or switch to a different nicotine replacement product if you have problems with side effects.

How do you use the gum?

Remove one piece of gum from pack. Chew it until you get a peppery taste or tingling sensation, then rest it between your cheeks and gums, until you need to chew again. Nicotine is absorbed into your bloodstream from your mouth.

How many pieces of nicotine gum should you use?

You can use up to 15 pieces of gum each day. NRT gum comes in two strengths, 2mg and 4mg.

- If you smoke less than 20 cigarettes a day try the 2mg gum.
- If you smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day start with the 4mg gum.

Keep your gum with you, ready to use if you get nicotine cravings.

You can choose sugar free gum if you prefer.

What if you still have nicotine withdrawal symptoms?

Tell your team if the nicotine gum does not manage your cravings.

They will help you use more gum or an additional nicotine replacement therapy product.

Can you smoke while using nicotine gum?

Yes it is safe for you to smoke while using nicotine gum.

When you are ready to cut down or quit, increase the amount of nicotine replacement therapy you use.

How long should you use nicotine gum for?

Most smokers use nicotine gum for at least three months. It is safe to use nicotine gum for up to five years.



What else should you know about using nicotine gum?

Do not drink anything while using or immediately after using nicotine gum.

The nicotine needs time to be absorbed through your cheeks and the back of your lips.

If chewed correctly, your nicotine blood levels are increased within five minutes and reach a maximum level after 30 minutes.