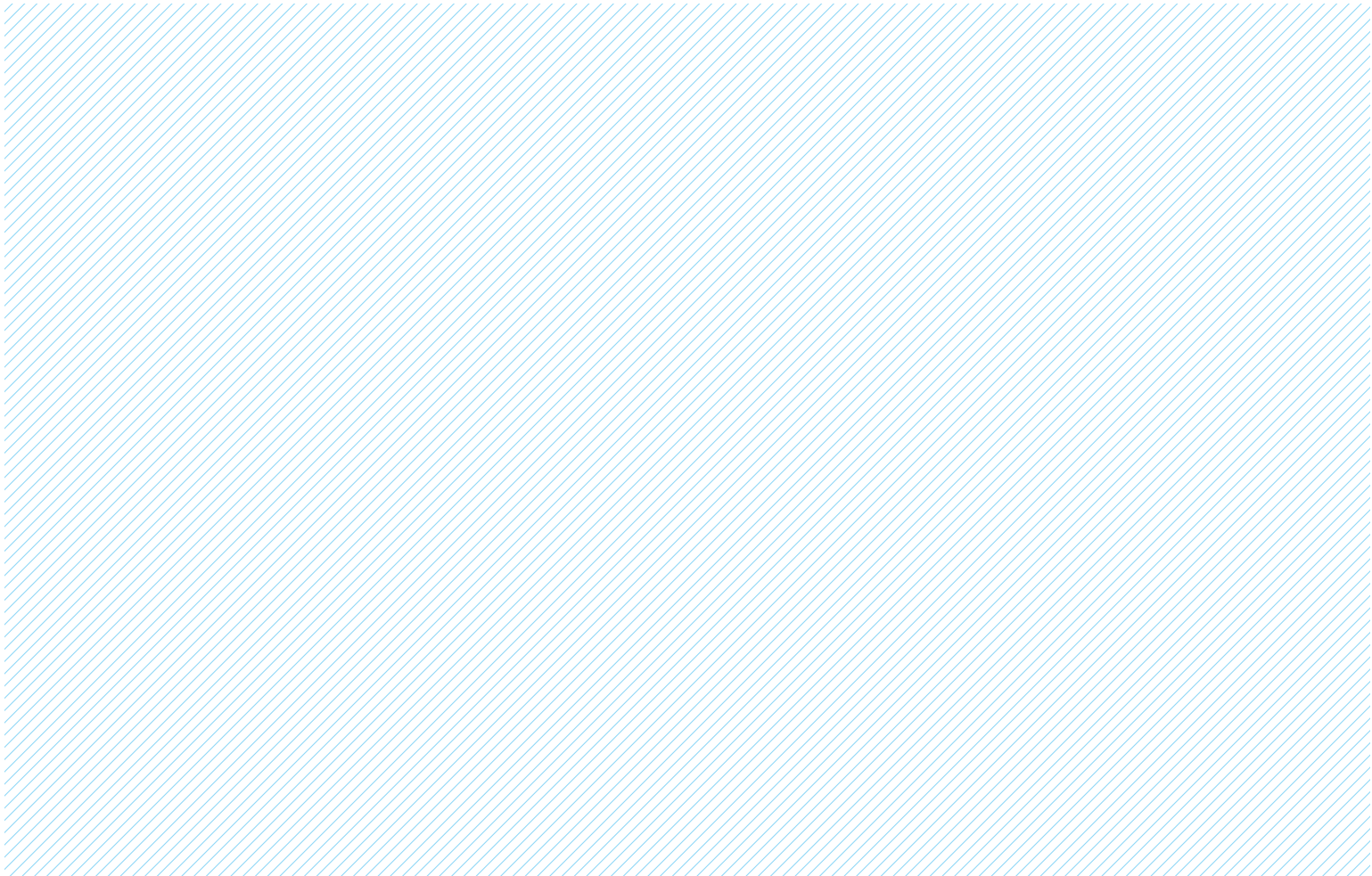




HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF **QUITTING SMOKING**

What you need to know about
nicotine medications and how they
can help you quit smoking



Are you... ?

Young professional looking for another young professional to share apartment. Located 4 blocks from the metro station in safe neighborhood. Close to park, tennis courts and lots of restaurants. Utilities included. Must be okay with smoking.

But you want to be... ?

Young professional ex-smoker looking for another young professional to share apartment. Located 4 blocks from the metro station in safe neighborhood. Close to park, tennis courts and lots of restaurants. Utilities included.

... maybe we can help (with the quitting smoking part) ...

I. BACKGROUND

Like many young adults who smoke, you've probably heard since the time you were a small child how smoking is bad for your health, how it can lead to early death, increase your chances of cancer, heart disease, and emphysema, how expensive it is, and how addictive the nicotine is in your cigarettes. You probably also know – most likely from first-hand experience – that quitting smoking isn't easy.

The good news is that you are not alone in your concern and anxiety over your ability to quit smoking, the questions you have about the best ways to help you quit, and when you do decide to quit, how to do it correctly to give yourself the best chance to succeed.

While smokers like you (aged 18 – 24) do try to quit smoking (over 80 percent have tried), only 1 in 10 have tried using medications that have been developed specifically to help you quit – medications such as nicotine replacement therapies (sometimes known as “NRTs”). However, what we have learned is that many smokers don't understand how to use these products correctly or they don't know just how effective they can be in helping you quit. What is very important to know is that there are several medications, including NRTs, that have been reviewed for their safety and effectiveness and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to help you quit smoking.



II. BUYER BEWARE

Unfortunately, research suggests that some young adult smokers are more likely to try to quit using products or services that don't work and have not been tested for their safety or effectiveness. For example, many young adults switch to light cigarettes in their attempts to quit, even though light cigarettes are just as addictive and deadly as other types of cigarettes and there is no evidence indicating that switching to light cigarettes can help you quit. There are many so-called stop smoking products and services on the market (electronic cigarettes, hypnosis, acupuncture, etc.) that confuse consumers and that sound too good to be true – the reality is that most are too good to be true, their safety is unknown and their claims of effectiveness have not been verified. For more information on the many products sold to consumers, visit the on-line database maintained by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, the Quitting and Reducing Tobacco Use Inventory of Products, secure.tobaccofreekids.org/Cessation.

If you're interested in learning more about what really works and what doesn't, take some time and look at the recommendations made by the U.S. Public Health Service in their guideline for doctors entitled, *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update* – you will find detailed analyses of medications, behavioral treatments and other aspects of quitting smoking that represent the best, most current science on the most effective tools to help you quit. The PHS guidelines (and other materials for consumers and health care professionals) can be found at www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/#consumer.

III. MYTHS AND FACTS

While there is overwhelming evidence regarding the safety and effectiveness of NRTs, there are persistent and unfounded myths associated with nicotine that are important to dispel since they may prevent you from using the very medications that could help you quit smoking. For example, data from the 2003 National Youth Smoking Cessation Survey show that 62 percent of the young smokers aged 16 to 24 surveyed believe that NRTs are as addictive as cigarettes. The reality is that NRTs are designed and regulated specifically so that they do not deliver addictive doses of nicotine. Further, data from the 2003 survey show that 37 percent of young smokers aged 16 to 24 think NRTs are as harmful as cigarettes. Again, this belief is false. Please visit the American Legacy Foundation's Become An Ex website where experts from the Mayo Clinic talk to you about some of these myths and about the products themselves – please feel free to take a look for yourself, www.becomeanex.org/medication-and-myths.php.

Unfortunately, misconceptions are not limited to NRTs. Much like beliefs that light cigarettes are less risky and a way to quit smoking, some smokers also believe that smokeless tobacco products, such as Skoal Bandits or Camel Snus, are a “safe” alternative to cigarette smoking despite the strong evidence that smokeless tobacco increases the risk of several health problems, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. While it is true that some forms of smokeless tobacco present less risk of disease compared to smoking, quitting all tobacco use and using safe and proven methods to quit, such as NRTs, should be the only way you should consider quitting cigarettes and other tobacco products.

IV. NRT “101” – HOW DO I USE NRT?



It is important that all FDA-approved smoking cessation medications are used as specified to ensure fewer complications and greater quitting success. Below are some frequently asked questions (courtesy of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's Tobacco Dependence Program) that show you how easy NRTs are to use. Be sure to talk with your doctor or other health care professional, and obtain additional, more detailed information regarding the use of any medications when quitting smoking. We also suggest you visit the Become An Ex website for helpful, simple advice on each type of NRT that is available so that you make the right decision for you – see www.becomeanex.org/nicotine-addiction.php.

HOW DO I USE NRT?

Make sure you are using the gum or lozenge in the best way:

- Chew the gum slowly.
- Fast chewing doesn't allow the nicotine to be absorbed from the lining of the mouth and can cause nausea.
- Don't drink anything for 15 minutes before and nothing while you are using nicotine gum or the lozenge so your mouth can absorb the nicotine.

Make sure you are using the patch in the best way:

- If you can't stop having a few cigarettes while using the patch, keep using the patch and talk with your provider about additional help.
- Don't let a few slips with cigarettes stop you from using the patch to quit smoking.

HOW LONG SHOULD I USE NRT?

- NRT product labels say that the product should be used for 8 or 12 weeks, depending on the product.
- If NRT is helping you not smoke, we suggest you do not even think about cutting down on NRT unless:
 - You believe you have a side effect from NRT.
 - You have 14 days in a row with no cravings or withdrawal or near slips back to smoking.
- Stop using NRT only when you feel very sure you can stay off cigarettes.
- If NRT helps you stop smoking, but you go back to smoking when you stop using NRT, you should seriously think about using NRT again the next time you try to stop smoking.

CAN I USE MORE THAN 1 NRT?

- If the amounts of NRT you are taking do not help you stop smoking, talk with your health care provider about using:
 - more NRT;
 - more than one type of NRT at the same time;
 - other smoking cessation medicines at the same time; and,
 - telephone or in person advice on quitting tips.
- Make sure you get the right amount of nicotine.
 - People who smoke more than 10 cigarettes per day should use a 4mg piece of gum or lozenge.
 - You may need to add nicotine gum or lozenges to help get over the hump.
 - You may need to use more than one patch at a time. Talk to your healthcare provider about this.

IS NRT EXPENSIVE?

- If the price of NRT is a concern, try to find "store brand" (generic) NRT products which are often less expensive than the brand name products.

OTHER SAFE AND EFFECTIVE METHODS TO QUIT SMOKING

There are two additional medications, other than NRTs, that are approved by the FDA for use in helping people quit smoking. These include bupropion (more commonly known as Zyban or Wellbutrin) and varenicline (more commonly known as Chantix) – both are described in more detail at the Become An Ex website (www.becomeanex.org/non-nicotine-medication.php), on the manufacturer's websites (www.chantix.com, us.gsk.com/products/assets/us_zyban.pdf), and in the Public Health Service guidelines noted earlier. These products are prescription-only, do not contain any nicotine, and are recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service.

In addition to medications, each state operates its own telephone-based quit smoking service, most commonly referred to as a quitline or a smoker's helpline. Individuals interested in quitting can call, toll free, **1-800-QUIT NOW** from anywhere in the United States and be put into contact with trained health professionals and quit coaches.