

31 May is WORLD NO TOBACCO day

Help your customers to quit – give them the facts

Quitting has immediate and long-term benefits

Stopping smoking has immediate and long-term benefits.

- Within 20 minutes of stopping, blood pressure, pulse rate and the temperature of the hands and feet returns to normal.
- Eight to 12 hours later, carbon monoxide and oxygen levels return to normal.
- Over the next three days, the risk of heart attack lessens, the sense of taste and smell improve and energy levels increase.
- Over the following months, circulation to the extremities improves as does lung function. The respiratory system starts to heal as cilia activity and mucous levels return to normal.
- One year after stopping, the risk of heart attack is reduced by half.
- After 5 years, the risk of lung cancer is halved.
- Ten years after quitting, the risk of lung cancer equals a non-smoker.

- After 15 years, the risk of a heart attack is the same as a non-smoker.

How to quit

• Make the decision to stop

The most difficult step in stopping smoking is making the decision to stop. Once a smoker has decided to stop smoking, there are numerous products available to help 'kick the habit' (see table below). The people who *really* want to stop smoking. It is worthwhile to speak to the smoker and find out how serious they are about quitting, before suggesting treatment when they don't have any real intention of quitting.

• Join a smoking cessation programme

Counselling is an important part of any smoking cessation programme. People that join a support group show better quit rates than those who decide to quit on their own. Hypnosis or acupuncture has also been shown to be of benefit.

Below is a list of suggestions that you could give a smoker who has decided to quit:

- Set a firm date to quit smoking.
- Let family and friends know that you are serious about quitting and when you are quitting.
- Get rid of all ashtrays, lighters and cigarettes the night before your quit date.
- Start to cut down before your quit date.
- Think positively and have realistic expectations – You will more than likely suffer from withdrawal symptoms such as a cough, headache, irritability, depression and lack of concentration. Be aware of these symptoms but don't let them stop you.
- Exercise.
- Change habits, especially those that you associate with lighting up.
- Drink plenty of fluids, preferably water.
- Join a support group, for example Smokers (086 11 000 79) or speak to The National Council Against Smoking (011) 643-2958.

Product	Dosage Form	Recommended use	Notes and special precautions
Nicorette® chewing gum	Gum / chewable resin complex	Chew the gum instead of smoking a cigarette, allowing for absorption of the released nicotine through the buccal cavity.	After 3 months the gum use must be reduced. For optimal results, the patient should use this product in conjunction with a smoking cessation programme.
Nicorette® patches	Transdermal patches	A patch is applied to the skin and nicotine is absorbed into the bloodstream. The strength of the patch must be reduced until they are no longer needed.	Use in conjunction with a smoking cessation programme for optimal results.
Nicorette® microtabs	Sublingual tablet	The tablet is placed under the tongue and dissolves slowly over about 30 minutes, releasing nicotine which is absorbed through the lining of the mouth.	Use in conjunction with a smoking cessation programme for optimal results. Dissolves in 30 minutes.
Quit® spray	Buccal spray	There are four sprays in the programme. Three have tapering doses of nicotine and the last one has no nicotine. The smoker sprays into his/her mouth instead of smoking a cigarette. As each spray finishes, the smoker moves onto the next lower dose spray.	Use in conjunction with a smoking cessation programme for optimal results.

By Joy Zuccaroli and Jacqueline van Schoor