

Twelve Facts to Help Dispel the Myths about Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) and Nicotine

For Health Care Providers, Pharmacists, Health Departments, Tobacco “Quitline” Counselors and Others Who Help Tobacco Users Quit

1. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) recommend several Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) as safe and effective tobacco dependence treatment aids. These products include useful tips on successful quitting (e.g., setting a quit date, seeking social support, and anticipating challenges).^{1, 2}
2. Some Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) require a prescription (the nicotine inhaler and nasal spray), but some are available over the counter (nicotine gum, nicotine patch, and lozenges).
3. NRT can double a smoker’s chances of quitting smoking²⁻⁴ and can be used alone or in combination.^{2, 4, 5}
4. The likelihood of long-term quitting success (quitting for more than 6 months) increases when a smoker uses NRT as instructed, in adequate amounts, and for a sufficient period of time.^{4, 5}
5. NRT reduces the withdrawal symptoms associated with cigarette smoking such as irritability, frustration, anger, craving, hunger, weight gain, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, and insomnia.⁴
6. Using NRT is not trading one nicotine addiction for another because the likelihood of long-term dependence on NRT is very low.¹⁻³
7. Nicotine does not cause the yellowing of teeth, fingernails, and skin; rather it is the tar found in cigarettes that does.⁶
8. It is primarily the many toxins found in cigarettes (e.g., Polonium 210, formaldehyde, ammonia, arsenic, hydrogen cyanide, benzene, butane, and carbon monoxide) rather than the nicotine that causes major negative health effects.^{3, 7-9} NRT products are much safer than cigarettes.^{3, 10}
9. The amount of nicotine in NRT is controlled and the nicotine is delivered more slowly than the nicotine in cigarettes.¹¹⁻¹³
10. Generally, NRT can be safely used by people with diabetes or high blood pressure and does not increase the risk of heart attacks. People with these conditions or who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant should consult with a doctor to determine if NRT is the right choice for them. (Note: the effects of NRT on those with acute cardiovascular disease has not been studied sufficiently).^{10, 14-27}
11. The cost of NRT is comparable to the cost of cigarettes for a 1-pack-per-day smoker. In July 2007, the daily cost of NRT was estimated at \$3.67 to \$6.57, depending on the form of NRT (see table on next page).²⁸ In comparison, the average retail price of a package of 20 cigarettes (full-priced brands) ranged from \$3.35 in South Carolina to \$6.45 in New Jersey.²⁹
12. NRT does not cause weight gain. Nicotine may actually help control appetite.¹⁰



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Estimated Daily Cost of NRT Use, July 2007 ²⁸

Product	Estimated Daily Cost
Inhaler	\$5.29
Gum	\$6.57
Lozenges	\$5.26
Patches	\$3.89
Nasal Spray	\$3.67
Sustained-release Bupropion (tablet)*	\$6.04
Varenicline (tablet)*	\$4.22

*non-nicotine cessation aid