# Scientifically Recommended Tobacco Cessation Services

## Understanding the Truths and Misrepresentations

American Cancer Society

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

fightcancer.org

## The Role of Scientifically Recommended Tobacco Cessation Services

Quitting tobacco can be challenging. However, a range of FDA-approved services is available to support individuals throughout this process. FDA-approved indicates these treatments have been scientifically evaluated and recognized by the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) as safe and effective for cessation. Tobacco cessation services include quit tobacco programs, nicotine replacement therapies (NRT), and prescription medications. **Combining these services has enhanced success rates** by helping individuals quit tobacco use and maintain long-term abstinence.

### Quit Tobacco Programs: Mental and Emotional Support

Nicotine is the addictive chemical in tobacco products. Nicotine ingestion or inhalation floods the brain with dopamine which temporarily produces feelings of stress relief or relaxation. As a result, **quitting tobacco can trigger withdrawal symptoms including negative mood states.**

Quit tobacco programs can help individuals who use tobacco to maneuver the mental and emotional challenges that come with quitting - providing encouragement, community, advice for how to manage cravings and prioritize self-care, and more. **These programs include telephone quitlines, mobile apps, email and text services, support groups, and counseling.**

### Nicotine Replacement Therapy*

As people continue to use tobacco products, they develop both a tolerance to and dependence on nicotine. Over time, cravings become stronger, leading people to increase the amount or frequency of their tobacco consumption. Ceasing tobacco use also causes physical withdrawal symptoms which can include cravings, reduced concentration, difficulty sleeping, and increased appetite.

NRT helps people who use tobacco quit by administering a controlled dose of tobacco-free nicotine to the body. This can offset physical nicotine withdrawal symptoms. **NRT comes in five FDA-approved forms: gum, lozenges, inhalers, nasal spray, and patch.** The recommended dosage and duration of NRT depends on the severity of an individual's nicotine dependance and the type of NRT.

### FDA-approved Prescription Medications*

There are **two FDA-approved prescription medications that can assist individuals in quitting tobacco: Varenicline (Chantix) and Bupropion (Zyban).** These anti-depressant medications lessen the intensity of withdrawal symptoms and, decrease the pleasurable effects of nicotine or decrease nicotine cravings.

*Nicotine Replacement Therapy is not authorized for children under 18 or pregnant women. Additionally, NRT and prescription cessation medications are only recommended for those who are dependent on nicotine.

## Debunking Harmful Misrepresentations:

The Tobacco Industry has been ruthless in rebranding e-cigarettes (vapes) and nicotine pouches as "harm reduction" products. **However, e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches are not approved by FDA's drug approval process (e.g., found safe and effective) as cessation medications.** Federal law classifies both nicotine pouches and e-cigarettes as tobacco products. There is insufficient evidence to conclude whether these products are effective for cessation or what the long-term health effects of these products may be.

What we do know, however, is that e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches often contain harmful chemicals, heavy metals, and fine particles and are sold in flavors that appeal to youth.

## Accessing Evidence-Based Tobacco Cessation Services

### Quit Tobacco Programs:

- **Quitlines:** 1-800-QUIT-NOW, 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (Español)
- **Mobile apps:** quitSTART
- **Support Groups:** Nicotine Anonymous (NicA)
- **Text services:** SmokefreeTXT
- **Email services:** Empowered to Quit
- **Many state health departments offer quit programs.**

*For further help finding a quit tobacco program call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345.*

### Nicotine Replacement Therapy:

- **NRT gum, lozenges, and patches** are sold over-the-counter.
- **NRT inhalers and nasal sprays** require a prescription. Talk to your health care provider about using these treatments.

### FDA-approved Prescription Medications:

- Talk to your health care provider about starting **Varenicline or Bupropion**.

## Empowered to Quit

Empowered to Quit is the American Cancer Society's email-based quit tobacco program. Through Empowered to Quit, participants receive personalized emails over the course of two months. These emails include tips on how to quit and provide support to help participants stay quit! One research study found that Empowered to Quit increased the chances of successfully quitting by 47%. Find the confidence to quit through ACS' Empowered to Quit!

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