Using the Nicotine Patch

The nicotine patch is used to help smokers slowly get off nicotine. The patch is worn like a Band-Aid®. It releases a steady stream of nicotine into the blood through the skin. This may help reduce the physical withdrawal symptoms that can occur during the first weeks of quitting smoking.

Getting the Patch:
Some insurance companies will cover the cost but may require a prescription and enrollment in an approved smoking cessation program. Over-the-counter patches cost approximately $250 for a full 3-step program.

The Right Dose:
Talk with your doctor first. Too much nicotine may cause nervousness, dizziness, nausea, insomnia, shakiness, or headache. A dose that is too low may not reduce your withdrawal symptoms enough.

Getting Started:
The day you quit smoking, place a patch on a clean, dry, non-hairy part of the body (like the upper arm or hip). Apply a new patch each day at the same time.

Tips for Proper Use:
• Do not experiment by cutting patches or using more than one at a time.
• Use tape or bandages if the patch slips off (from oily or wet skin).
• Avoid using moisturizing soaps, creams, or oils on areas where you use the patch.
• Change the location daily to avoid skin irritation.

The Right Schedule:
Read the instructions on the patch package carefully. Check the options on the back of this sheet, and talk with your doctor about the schedule that might work best for you.

Potential Problems:
• Using the patch while pregnant or nursing may cause problems. Talk with your doctor first.
• The adhesive may cause redness, itching, or burning in the area where the patch is worn, but should go away in about an hour. Different brands use different adhesives, so switching brands may help.
• Vivid dreams and sleeping problems are possible side-effects.
• Smoking with the patch on can increase your heart rate or blood pressure and may be dangerous. If you decide to smoke, remove the patch and wait a few hours before smoking.

Remember:
You’re doing the work, not the patch. The patch is just a tool to help. Make sure you plan for trigger situations. And give yourself credit for every day you don’t smoke!

Use the chart on the other side of this page to help you.

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## Nicotine Patch Reference Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Where to Start</th>
<th>How Many Hours per Day to Keep It On</th>
<th>Suggested Plan</th>
<th>Average Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicoderm CQ® or generic (21mg., 14mg., 7mg.)</td>
<td>If you smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day, start with 21 mg.</td>
<td>24 hours: Remove at night only if sleeping problems occur.</td>
<td>6 weeks on 21mg, 2 weeks on 14mg, 2 weeks on 7mg.</td>
<td>$250 Nicoderm $210 Generic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you smoke 10 or less cigarettes a day, start with 14 mg.</td>
<td>24 hours: Remove at night only if sleeping problems occur.</td>
<td>6 weeks on 14mg, 2 weeks on 7mg.</td>
<td>$200 Nicoderm $160 Generic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Talk with your doctor about which patch will work best for you.*