

Manchester 

Primary Care Trust

Manchester Public Health Development Service



What can I use to help me

stop  
smoking?

Tel: 0161 205 5998

[www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk](http://www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk)

# What can I use to help me stop smoking?

## A guide for people who live or work in Manchester

There are three types of product available on the NHS to help you to stop smoking – nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), Zyban and Champix. This leaflet gives information about obtaining these products and what to expect from them. It is important to understand that none of these products available ‘make’ you stop smoking - you will still need determination and should plan practical strategies, which your health professional can help you with.

### **Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)**

There are six types of NRT available to help you stop smoking – patches, gum, inhalator, microtabs, nasal spray and lozenge.

### **How does NRT work?**

Although cigarettes contain more than 4000 chemicals, nicotine is the only addictive one. It is therefore the reason for any physical cravings experienced when stopping smoking. NRT works by gradually weaning your body off the nicotine that you got from your cigarettes. You should begin your treatment of NRT on your ‘quit date’ (ie. the day you stop smoking completely).

NRT provides you with a ‘clean’ form nicotine – you are reducing from the 4000 chemicals in cigarettes to just one! Most courses of NRT last around 8 – 12 weeks. NRT reduces the physical craving to smoke by supplying the brain with nicotine. It does not however prevent the physical desire to smoke. NRT has been proven to double your chances of successfully stopping smoking.

### **Can I use NRT?**

Nicotine itself has a very minimal effect on health – it increases blood pressure and pulse rate for a short time. The amount of nicotine you get from NRT, however, is less than most smokers get from their cigarettes at around a third of a 20-a-day smoker. As with all medicines, you should always read the information leaflet in your NRT packet. NRT can be used by people aged 12 and above including smokers with cardiovascular disease and pregnant women. If you are pregnant oral forms of NRT are preferable to patches. If patches are

used they should be taken off before going to bed at night. If you have any questions contact us or speak to your health professional.

## **Where can I get NRT?**

### **1. Stop Smoking Specialist Advisors**

Manchester Stop Smoking Service employs advisors who run clinics across the city. Ring 0161-205-5998 to make an appointment.

The Advisors can provide you with 6 weeks' supply of NRT either free or at prescription cost. They also offer one-to-one help and support before, during and after stopping smoking. At the end of the 6 weeks, the Advisor will give you a letter for your GP asking for a prescription for the rest of your course.

### **2. Manchester NRT Pharmacy Scheme**

You can also drop into your local pharmacy for help and support with stopping smoking. Many pharmacies in Manchester provide 6 weeks' free or reduced cost NRT. Ring 0161-205-5998 to find out which of your local pharmacies are involved in this scheme.

Again, once the six weeks' NRT is over, you will get a letter for your GP requesting a prescription for the rest of your course.

### **4. GP Surgery/ Health Visitor**

GPs and Health Visitors are keen to help people who want to stop smoking and will give prescriptions for NRT. Some GPs may ask you to see your practice nurse or healthcare assistant for extra support.

### **5. Supermarkets/ Pharmacies**

You can buy all types of NRT at pharmacists and some are also available from supermarkets.

What can I use to help me **stop**  
**NRT** smoking?

## **Prescription only medications (Champix and Zyban)**

Champix are non-nicotine medicines for use when stopping smoking. They can only be prescribed by your GP alongside specialist support from a health professional. Your GP may refer you to Manchester Stop Smoking Service to assess your suitability and to offer advice and support for your quit attempt. You will also be required to commit to having ongoing support whilst you are taking the drug.

## **How do I get Champix/Zyban?**

Contact your GP surgery and tell them that you want to use Champix/Zyban to help you to stop smoking. They will make an appointment for you to see the GP, Practice Nurse, or Health Care Assistant, or ask you to contact Manchester Stop Smoking Service who will assess your motivation and readiness to stop. If you have been asked to contact Manchester Stop Smoking Service they will take your details and refer you to a Specialist Advisor. The advisor will make an appointment to see you to discuss stopping smoking and assess your readiness to quit. If you are prepared to stop, the advisor will give you a form and a letter for you to take back to your GP, to let them know this. Your GP will then make a medical assessment of your suitability for Champix/Zyban. The decision will rest with your GP. If, your GP decides that you are not medically suitable for Champix/Zyban this does not mean that you cannot stop smoking. Speak to your Specialist Advisor and discuss alternatives.

## **How does Champix work?**

The nicotine from cigarettes attaches to receptors in the brain cells to stimulate part of the brain into releasing chemicals which can give the smoker a feeling of satisfaction or reward. When the brain no longer receives a regular supply of nicotine it can result in withdrawal symptoms such as irritability and depression. Champix stimulates the nicotine receptors to mimic the effects of nicotine at a lower level. This will help to reduce withdrawal effects and cravings when you stop smoking, allowing you to concentrate on breaking your habit. At the same time it blocks the receptors and prevents nicotine from hitting the brain - this blocks or blunts the effects you feel if you do smoke a cigarette helping to prevent a relapse. A course of treatment usually lasts for 12 weeks.

## **Is Champix suitable for me?**

Champix cannot be used by pregnant or breast feeding women, people under 18 years old or people with severe renal impairment. People with epilepsy, COPD, CHD, diabetes and psychiatric illness should speak to their GP about their suitability for Champix.

## How should I take Champix?

First, decide on a 'quit date' – the date you intend to stop smoking. Start taking the tablets 8-14 days before your quit date (you can continue to smoke up to your quit date). Days 1-3 take one 0.5mg tablet once a day. Days 4-7 take one 0.5mg tablet twice a day. From day 8 to week 12 the dose is 1mg twice a day. Take each tablet with a full glass of water, preferably after eating. So, ideally, after breakfast, and after your evening meal.

## What will happen when I use Champix?

Many people report that cravings to smoke are reduced along with withdrawal symptoms. People who have had a cigarette during their course of Champix reported that they did not have any feelings of 'pleasure' or 'satisfaction' from the cigarette – in many cases this has helped to prevent a relapse.

Most people do not develop any side-effects, or they are only minor. The most commonly reported side-effect is nausea. This is often mild and tolerable and may be eased by taking the tablets just after a meal with a full glass of water. Other commonly reported side effects that occur in some people include insomnia, abnormal dreams, headaches and flatulence. Less commonly reported side effects have been depressed mood and changes in behaviour. Tell your doctor if you have any side effects. A reduction in dose may be an option.

## How does Zyban work?

When nicotine hits the brain, it causes an increase in 'feel-good' chemicals (called neuro-transmitters) to be released. Zyban is a medicine that was first developed to treat depression. It was found that it helped some smokers to stop smoking. It is not clear how it works. It alters the level of some chemicals in the brain (neurotransmitters). This seems to relieve the withdrawal symptoms associated with stopping smoking (such as craving, anxiety, restlessness, headaches, irritability, hunger, poor concentration). 2 to 6 weeks after stopping smoking, the brains of ex-smokers have got used to the new level of 'feel-good' chemicals, and withdrawal symptoms stop.

Like NRT, Zyban has been shown to double the chances of successful quitting.

## Is Zyban suitable for me?

There are several groups of people for whom Zyban is not suitable. These include pregnant or breast-feeding women, people with eating disorders, bipolar disorder and people with a history of seizures. There are also several types of prescribed medicine that should not be taken at the same time as Zyban.

## How should I take Zyban?

Zyban is usually taken for a period of 7 – 9 weeks. Days 1 – 6 take one 150 mg tablet per day. From day 7 until the end of your treatment, take one 150 mg tablet twice a day (a minimum of 8 hours apart).

You should not take more than one tablet at a time and not more than two per day. Your 'quit date' (ie the day you stop smoking completely) should be set for between days 11 and 14. In other words, you should continue to smoking for the first 11 - 14 days of using Zyban.

## What will happen when I use Zyban?

Many people report that cravings to smoke are very much reduced when they are taking Zyban. This is also true for the irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating and depression that many people feel when stopping smoking.

Zyban has several fairly common side effects. Some people do not experience these at all and others can get one or more of them strongly.

The most common side effects reported by people using Zyban are:  
dry mouth (sugar free sweets, gum and/ or frequent sips of water should help)  
insomnia (try taking your evening tablet a bit earlier)  
headache (drink lots of fresh water and get some fresh air)

**Remember:** It takes most people several attempts at stopping smoking before they are successful. Try not to be too disappointed if you relapse. Every time you make another attempt to stop, your chances of success are higher than the time before!

If you want any more information on stopping smoking, NRT, Zyban and Champix or the help available in Manchester, please ring **Manchester Stop Smoking Service on 0161-205-5998** or visit our website: [www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk](http://www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk)

