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## NICOTINE GUM/LOZENGE (Nicorette, others) Fact Sheet [G]

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### Bottom Line:

First-line intervention for those patients who can stop smoking at initiation of therapy; nicotine in the form of gum or lozenge may act as a substitute oral activity, which may aid in behavior modification.

### FDA Indications:

#### Smoking cessation.

### Dosage Forms:

- **Gum (G):** 2 mg, 4 mg (over the counter).
- **Lozenge (G):** 2 mg, 4 mg (over the counter).

### Dosage Guidance:

- For gum: Chew one piece of gum PRN urge to smoke, up to 24 pieces/day. Patients who smoke <25 cigarettes/day should start with the 2 mg strength; patients smoking  $\geq$ 25 cigarettes/day should start with the 4 mg strength. Use the following 12-week dosing schedule: For weeks one through six, chew a piece of gum every one to two hours; to increase chances of quitting, chew at least nine pieces/day. For weeks seven through nine, chew a piece of gum every two to four hours. For weeks 10–12, chew a piece of gum every four to eight hours. Patients should not chew more than one piece of gum at a time.
- For lozenges: Patients who smoke their first cigarette within 30 minutes of waking should use the 4 mg strength; otherwise the 2 mg strength is recommended. Use the following 12-week dosing schedule: For weeks one through six, use a lozenge every one to two hours; to increase chances of quitting, use at least nine lozenges/day. For weeks seven through nine, use a lozenge every two to four hours. For weeks 10–12, use a lozenge every four to eight hours. Maximum dose is five lozenges every six hours or 20 lozenges/day. Patients should not use more than one lozenge at a time.
- Patients should be advised to completely stop smoking upon initiation of therapy.

**Monitoring:** No routine monitoring recommended unless clinical picture warrants.

**Cost:** \$

### Side Effects:

- Most common: Headache; indigestion; nausea; hiccups; tongue, mouth, and throat irritation or tingling; jaw ache (gum).
- Pregnancy/breastfeeding: Limited data suggest relative safety in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

### Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:

- Nicotinic-cholinergic receptor agonist.
- Metabolized primarily through liver as well as kidneys and lungs;  $t_{1/2}$ : 1–2 hours.
- Minimal risk for drug interactions. Successful cessation of smoking may increase serum levels of medications metabolized by CYP1A2 (eg, clozapine, olanzapine, theophylline), which is induced by hydrocarbons in smoke; nicotine itself has no effect.

### Clinical Pearls:

- Chew gum slowly until it tingles (about 15 chews), then park gum between cheek and gum until tingle is gone (about one minute); repeat until most of tingle is gone (~30 minutes).
- Lozenges should not be chewed or swallowed; allow them to dissolve slowly (~20–30 minutes).
- Heavy smokers should use higher-dose gum or lozenge and at least nine pieces/day to maximize chances of success. Do not use more than one piece at a time.
- Each 4 mg lozenge or gum results in 2 mg of absorbed nicotine, equivalent to two cigarettes.

### Fun Fact:

Nicotine gum is available in a variety of flavors (fruit, mint, cinnamon, orange, cherry, and “original”).