

# Nicotine Gum Guidelines

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To watch videos on how to properly use the nicotine gum, visit [www.takingtexasobaccofree.com/videos](http://www.takingtexasobaccofree.com/videos). The video is available in English and Spanish.

## Purpose of Nicotine Gum

Most people who use tobacco products experience nicotine withdrawal symptoms after they quit, such as craving and urges to smoke, tension, irritability, sadness, sleep problems, and difficulty concentrating. These symptoms often cause people to start using the tobacco product again.

Nicotine gum is a type of nicotine replacement therapy (commonly referred to as NRT) that contains low levels of nicotine that is released into the bloodstream. Nicotine gum is another form of NRT that a person chews: similar to, but not exactly like, chewing gum.

Despite their effectiveness, these products are not “magic bullets.” People may still experience some withdrawal symptoms while using them. It is very important that you learn to be a non-tobacco user while you are using a NRT product and avoid temptations to use a tobacco product.

## Speak with a Doctor BEFORE Using Nicotine Gum if...

- you are a woman and are pregnant or intend to become pregnant or are currently breastfeeding.
- you have heart problems such as congenital heart failure, irregular heartbeat, or recent previous heart attacks.
- you have no teeth or fragile teeth. The nicotine gum is sugar-free and doesn't cause tooth decay, but it is a little harder than regular chewing gum and may be hard for you to chew.
- you have high blood pressure not controlled with medication, or if you have stomach ulcers, diabetes, or a history of seizures.

## Proper Use of Nicotine Gum

- The recommended dose of your gum will depend on how much tobacco you use per day and how quickly you use your tobacco product upon waking up. The number of pieces of gum you use will change according to your stage in the nicotine replacement treatment. Your healthcare professional will provide specific guidance.
- When chewing the gum, it is important to use the “chew and park method.”
  1. First, place one piece of gum in your mouth and chew it approximately 10 times or until you get a bitter taste.
  2. Once the gum begins to taste bitter, “park” the gum between your cheek and gum. You will feel a tingling (this is good) and let the gum sit there for 5 – 7 minutes or until the tingling stops.

3. Once the tingling stops, move the gum and chew it a few times and “park” the gum on the other side of your mouth between the cheek and gum until it stops tingling.
  4. Continue to “chew and park” the gum until it stops tingling, which will be about 20 minutes.
  5. Once the tingling stops, place the gum in the trash.
- Do NOT use more than one piece of gum at a time or chew one after another, since this can cause hiccups, heartburn, nausea, or other side effects.
  - Do NOT eat or drink 15 minutes before using or while the gum is in your mouth.
  - Don’t worry if you do not like the taste of the gum at first. Nicotine gum is a medication, not a candy. Most people get used to the taste after a day or two.

## Possible Negative Side Effects of Nicotine Gum

Although many people experience no side effects from the gum, some people have minor reactions. The most common is hiccups, sore throat, or indigestion. Some people may experience irregular or rapid heartbeat. Other side effects may include nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

Do not let children handle these products. If any severe side effects or poisoning is suspected – for you or someone else – such as severe allergic reaction, seizures, dizziness, difficulty breathing, or irregular heartbeat, contact your health care provider and seek medical care immediately. You can contact the American Association of Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 or seek further care at an emergency room.

## Storage of Nicotine Gum

- Store at room temperature.
- Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- Keep away from excessive heat, moisture, and light.

If you have questions about the nicotine gum, contact your healthcare professional.

## The recommendation for my nicotine replacement treatment is:

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