PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Nicotine

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

FT Nicotine Mini [OTC]; FT Nicotine [OTC]; Habitrol [OTC]; Nicoderm CQ [OTC]; Nicorette Mini [OTC]; Nicorette Starter Kit [OTC]; Nicorette [OTC]; Nicotine Mini [OTC]; Nicotine Step 1 [OTC]; Nicotine Step 2 [OTC]; Nicotine Step 3 [OTC]; Nicotrol; Nicotrol NS; Thrive [OTC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat nicotine withdrawal.
- It is used to curb the craving to smoke.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

All products:

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: Chest pain or pressure, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, or a recent heart attack.
- If you still smoke, chew tobacco, or use other products that have nicotine while using this drug.
- If the patient is younger than 18 years of age. Do not give this drug to a child younger than 18 years of age without talking with the doctor.

Gum:

- If you have temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disease.

Nose spray:

- If you have asthma or nose problems like allergies, runny or stuffy nose, or nasal polyps.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is

safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Get counseling to help you quit smoking.
- Do not use more than told. Unsafe side effects may happen.
- Tell your doctor if you are taking another drug to help you stop smoking.
- You may have signs of nicotine withdrawal when you try to quit smoking even when using drugs like this one to help you quit smoking. There are many signs of nicotine withdrawal. Tell your doctor if you have any bad effects.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- When you stop smoking, other drugs may be affected. Talk with your doctor.

- Tell your doctor if you have not been able to quit smoking after using this drug for as long as it says to use it.
- If you have phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.
- If you are on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your doctor. Some of these products have sodium.
- If you are allergic to soy, talk with your doctor. Some products have soy.
- This drug may cause harm or be deadly if used or swallowed by children or pets. If a child uses this drug or if this drug is swallowed by a child or pet, call a doctor or poison control center right away.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

Gum:

- Gum chewing may cause problems with dental work.

Patch:

- The patch may have metal. Take off the patch before an MRI.
- If you have strange dreams or other trouble sleeping, take off the patch at bedtime.
- This drug may cause harm if chewed or swallowed. If this drug has been put in the mouth, call a doctor or poison control center right away.

Nose spray:

- If the bottle breaks, do not get this drug on your skin. If it does get on your skin wash off with water right away.
- During the first week, it is common to have a hot, peppery feeling in the back of the throat or nose, sneezing, coughing, watery eyes, or runny nose. Using this drug on a regular basis during the first week will help you adjust to the side effects. If these side effects do not get better after a week, call your doctor.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Mood changes.
- Feeling confused.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.

- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Drooling.
- Shakiness.
- Cold sweats.
- Blurred eyesight.
- Change in hearing.

Nose spray:

- Nose sores.
- Mouth sores.

Gum and lozenges:

- Sore throat.
- Mouth, teeth, or jaw problems.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

All products:

- Trouble sleeping.
- Bad dreams.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Headache.
- Joint pain.
- Back pain.
- Irritation where this drug was used.

Gum:

- Mouth tingling.
- Gum changes.

Nose spray:

- Constipation.

Inhaler:

- Cough.
- Runny nose.

Lozenges:

- Warmth or tingling in the mouth.
- Hiccups.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Inhaler:

- For breathing in only.
- Keep out of your eyes.
- Clean the mouthpiece often with soap and water.

Gum and lozenges:

- This product comes in 2 doses. The dose depends on if your first cigarette of the day is within or after 30 minutes of waking up. If you are not sure which dose to use, talk with your pharmacist or doctor.
- Use right after opening.

Gum:

- Do not swallow gum.
- Chew slowly until there is a tingling or peppery taste in the mouth.
- Then place between the cheek and gum.
- After the taste or tingle is gone, chew again slowly.
- Put between the cheek and gum at some other site once the taste or tingle comes back.
- Keep repeating this for about 30 minutes or until the taste or tingle is gone.
- Do not eat or drink within 15 minutes before using the gum or while you are using it.
- If needed, you may use a second piece within the hour. Do not use 1 piece right after the other.

Lozenges:

- Suck oral lozenge. Do not chew, break, or crush it. Do not swallow it whole.
- Move this drug to the other side of the mouth every so often while it dissolves. This may take about 20 to 30 minutes.
- Try not to swallow very often while you are sucking on this drug.

- Do not eat or drink within 15 minutes before using the lozenge or while you are using it.
- Do not use more than 1 lozenge at a time. Do not use 1 lozenge right after another.

Patch:

- The patch comes in 3 doses. The dose depends on how many cigarettes you smoke in a day. If you are not sure which dose to use, talk with your pharmacist or doctor.
- Put patch on clean, dry, healthy skin on the chest, back, belly, or upper arm. Move the site with each new patch.
- Put patch on a site without hair.
- Wash your hands after use.
- Each patch can stay on for 16 to 24 hours. If you crave cigarettes when you wake up, wear the patch for 24 hours.
- Do not leave on the skin for more than 24 hours.
- Do not put on more than 1 patch at the same time unless your doctor tells you to.
- Do not use patches that are cut or do not look right.

Nose spray:

- For the nose only.
- Keep out of your eyes.
- You will need to prime the pump before first use. You may also need to prime the pump if it has not been used for some time. Be sure you know when you need to prime the pump and how to do it. Talk with the doctor or pharmacist if you have questions.
- Blow your nose before use.
- When using, tilt your head back.
- Spray up the nose only. Do not spray onto the wall joining the two nostrils.
- Do not sniff, swallow, or breathe in through your nose while you are using your dose of this drug.
- Breathe out from your mouth.
- Put the cap back on after you are done using your dose.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Use a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not use 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

All products:

- Store at room temperature.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

Inhaler:

- Protect cartridges from light.

Gum:

- Protect from light.
- After using, wrap the used gum in paper before you throw it away.

Lozenges:

- Protect from light.
- Wrap any part not used all the way in paper before you throw it away.

Patch:

- After you take off a skin patch, be sure to fold the sticky sides of the patch to each other. Throw away used patches where children and pets cannot get to them.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

Last Reviewed Date

2024-02-09

Copyright

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Nicotine - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center