

What you should know about the . . . ***nicotine patch***

Nicotine patches are a safe method to reduce cravings for cigarettes when used as directed. They have been approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to be sold over-the-counter (without a prescription). The nicotine patch does not cause cancer or heart attacks, but smoking cigarettes does. The chemicals in cigarettes and cigarette smoke are what cause cancer, not the nicotine. Instead of inhaling hundreds of toxic chemicals when you smoke cigarettes, you will only be getting small amounts of nicotine through your skin when you use the patch.

Nicotine patch usually comes in::

- 7 mg
- 14 mg
- 21 mg

(Covered by MediCal)

Be prepared !!!

- Get the patches while you are getting ready to quit—before your quit day.
- The patch often comes in doses for 2 weeks at a time. Get more before you run out.
- The patch won't give you the same feeling as cigarettes. Instead, the patch will reduce your cravings and keep you comfortable while you learn other things to do instead of smoking.

How do I use the patch???

Before using the patch read all of the instructions carefully. If you have any questions, talk to your health care provider.

- Open the patch package with scissors. Peel off the protective cover. Try not to touch the sticky side of the patch as you put it on a hairless part of your body, between your neck and your waist. Press firmly for ten seconds to make it stick.
- Put on a new patch each morning to a relatively hairless spot on the upper chest, back, or outer arm (body hair may be shaved if necessary, but don't put the patch on a place where you have cut the skin). Put on a fresh patch everyday, as it loses strength after 24 hours.
- Put the patch on a different spot each day to be easier on the skin. Try not to reuse the same spot for 2 weeks. When you do reuse the spot, change it a little. If the patch falls off, put on another one. If this continues to happen, try putting adhesive tape over it.
- The 7mg, 14mg, and 21mg nicotine patch is used overnight. Leave the patch on if you normally smoked in the middle of the night, or first thing in the morning. Vivid dreams may be caused by too much nicotine. Too little nicotine may cause sleep disturbances. If you are having a problem, try taking off the patch at night.
- Wash your hands after handling new or used patches. Nicotine on your hands may get into your eyes and nose and cause redness, irritation, itching, or more serious problems. Nicotine is poisonous if swallowed. The patches should be folded in half and thrown away out of reach of children and pets.
- Water will not harm the patch if it is put on right. You can bathe, swim, and shower while the patch is on. If your patch falls off during the day, put on a new patch. Don't put patches on areas where you have used lotions and creams. The patch won't stick as well.

Take good care of yourself!
deep breathing
breaks music
asking for help and support

(Flip the page!!!)

Don't stop using the patch before the recommended time.

- Even if you feel better in a couple of days, continue to use the patch. The patch will keep you comfortable and reduce cravings while you learn other things to do instead of smoking. It is important to use the patch for the full 6 to 8 weeks.
- Smoking cigarettes while using the patch may prevent you from quitting smoking and could be harmful. If you continue to smoke or have urges to smoke while using the patch, you may need a higher dosage patch or you may need to add nicotine gum or lozenges to keep the cravings down. Consult your doctor, or cessation counselor right away. If you can't reach them, try calling the California Smoker's Helpline at: 1-800-NO-BUTTS.

Consult a doctor before using the patch, if you . . .

- have had a heart attack in the last 2 weeks;
- are pregnant or nursing;
- have severe heart rhythm problems;
- have angina, or a chest pain in the area of your heart.

Do NOT use the patch without a Doctor's specific recommendation if you have any of the above conditions.

Do, do, do...

- Talk to someone who can support you, if you have a slip and pick up a cigarette. Try not to feel bad. This is a hard process. Try to stop smoking immediately.
- Call your doctor if you are having any problems using the patch.

Most importantly . . .

Take good care of yourself!
 deep breathing
 breaks music
 asking for
help and support

Call 1-800-NO-BUTTS for FREE help and support



Warning !!!

Too much nicotine can cause symptoms of:

- Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat
- Cold sweats
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Drooling

If you are having any of these symptoms, stop using the patch and talk to your health care provider .

If your skin gets red, or develops a rash . . .

or is itching so much that it is bothering you, buy 1% hydrocortisone cream in the drug store and put a little bit on the red areas 2-3 times a day. Do not use the hydrocortisone cream under the patch. Call your doctor if problems persist more than 4 days.

