

Sample Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) Facility Policy

Location

Policy #

Date:

EMPLOYEE SMOKING CESSATION BENEFIT: NO COST PROVISION OF

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (NRT)

1.

2. PURPOSE. To set forth policy and procedures for the provision of NRT to employees.

3. POLICY and PROCEDURE.

A. Eligibility: All employees who wish to quit smoking and are participating in a smoking cessation program as part of Employee Health Promotion Disease Prevention (EHPDP) Programs or existing smoking cessation services at the facility.

B. Procedure: Employee must request NRT through the Employee Health Office (or other authorized provider, depending on the facility).

a. Employee Wellness Coach will screen and coach the employee on the possible use of NRT.

b. Employee will participate in the American Facilities Tobacco Cessation Program.

c. Employee will receive the NRT the week the group plans to stop smoking.

d. The NRT will be provided free of charge.

e. Nicotine patch dosing steps:

Step 1: 21 milligrams (mg)/day, Step 2: 14 mg/day, Step 3: 7mg /day

Employees smoking 20 or more cigarettes per day:

1. Step 1 for 4-6 weeks based on clinical judgment.

2. Then Step 2 for 2 weeks.

3. Then Step 3 for 2 weeks.

Employees smoking less than 20 cigarettes per day:

Step 2 for 6 weeks.

1. Then Step 3 for 2 weeks.

f. Nicotine gum or lozenge dosing:

1. Gum or lozenge may be used as primary source of nicotine or as a supplement to the nicotine patches.
2. If gum or lozenges are used as a primary source of nicotine only: heavy smokers (more than 25 cigarettes per day), 1 piece of 4 mg gum or lozenge every 1-2 hours for weeks 1-6, 1 piece of 4 mg gum or lozenge every 2-4 hours for weeks 7-9, 1 piece of 4 mg gum or lozenge every 4-8 hours for week 10.
3. If gum or lozenges are used as a supplement for the nicotine patch use:
 - Heavy smokers (more than 25 cigarettes per day), 1 piece of 4 mg as needed.
 - Others, 1 piece of 2 mg gum or lozenge as needed.

g. Contraindications: Pregnancy or likelihood of pregnancy and recent cardiovascular event (48 hours):

1. Precautions:

- Allergy to adhesive tape; increased risk of rash (transdermal);
- Cardiac arrhythmias, serious; may increase heart rate;
- Coronary heart disease may increase heart rate;
- Concurrent use of other nicotine-containing products such as cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, or nicotine gum; increased risk of cardiovascular events;
- Hypertension, uncontrolled; may increase blood pressure (transdermal);
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) procedures done while wearing Habitrol(R) or opaque NicoDerm CQ(R) transdermal patches may cause skin burns;
- Myocardial infarction, history or recent; may increase heart rate;

- Skin conditions; increased risk of rash (transdermal); and
 - Tachycardia or palpitations may occur.
- h. If an employee continues to require NRT after 8-10 weeks of therapy, the prescription may be refilled as deemed appropriate by the provider.
- i. The Employee Wellness Coach will put the order in and the NRT will be dispensed by the Outpatient Pharmacy. Only one strength of NRT will be dispensed at a time (i.e., lower dosages related to the taper will be dispensed at the approximate due date).
3. RESPONSIBILITY.
- A. The Medical Center Director has overall responsibility for the management of Employee Health.
- B. The Occupational Health Physician has responsibility for advising employees and management officials on the policies and procedures concerning Employee Health.
- C. The Employee Wellness Coach has responsibility for management of the Wellness is NOW (WIN) VA Program and for monitoring the Employee Smoking Cessation Program.
- D. The Outpatient Pharmacy has responsibility for dispensing NRT to eligible employees.
4. PROCEDURE. See number 2.
5. REFERENCES. VHA Directive 2010-041, Smoking Cessation Benefit for VHA Employees: No-Cost Provision of Nicotine Replacement Therapy.
6. ATTACHMENTS. Attachment A, Comparison of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs).
7. RESCISSIONS.

ATTACHMENT A. Comparison of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs)

	Nicotine Transdermal Patch	Nicotine Polacrilex Gum	Nicotine Polacrilex Lozenge
Trade Name and Dose Availability	Nicoderm/Habitrol® 21 milligrams (mg)/14mg/7mg Nicotrol®* 15mg/10mg/5mg	Nicorette® Gum 2mg, 4mg	Commit® Lozenge 2mg, 4mg
Recommended Regimen	High Dependence† 21mg x 4-6 weeks (wks), then 14mg x 2wks, then 7mg x 2wks Low Dependence 14mg x 6-8wks, then 7mg x 2wks	High Dependence† 4mg q1-2hrs x 6wks,* then q2-4hrs x 4wks, then q4-6hrs x 2wks Low Dependence 2mg q1-2hrs x 6wks then q2-4hrs x 3wks then q4-6hrs x 3wks No more than 24 pieces in 24hrs *Note: q represents quaque, which is Latin for "every".	High Dependence† 4mg Low Dependence 2mg -Suck 1 lozenge q1-2hrs x 6wks, then 1 q2-4hrs x 3wks, then 1 q4-8hrs x 3wks -No more than 20 lozenges in 24hrs or 5 lozenges in 6hrs
Administration Comments	-Usually worn for 16 - 24hrs -Apply from neck to waist -Rotate sites -Takes 2-3 days for effect after application of first patch	-Chew slowly (about 10 chews) until peppery taste then "park" between teeth and gums till taste dissipates. Repeat process on and off for 30 minutes per piece; rotate sites Can be used in combination with patch	-Allow lozenge to dissolve slowly over 20-30 minutes shifting in mouth occasionally. -Do not chew or swallow (increased risk of GI side effects) Can be used in combination with patch
1-year Abstinence Rates‡	16-30% (dose dependent); Higher with combination therapy: 35%	20-25% Higher with combination therapy: 35%	15-20% Higher with combination therapy: 35%
Time to Peak Blood Concentrations	4-10hrs	15-30 minutes	No data on time to peak concentration
Absorption	75-90%	30%	30%

	Nicotine Transdermal Patch	Nicotine Polacrilex Gum	Nicotine Polacrilex Lozenge
Advantages (+) and Disadvantages (-)	(+) Best adherence; easy to use; consistent rate of exposure; unobtrusive (-) Less effective for cravings; difficult to control titration; absorption increased at elevated temperatures	(+) Helps prevent sudden urges; can titrate to adjust for cravings; oral substitute for cigarettes (-) Difficult for those with poor dentition or dentures; must learn proper chewing technique; Must abstain from drinking/eating during gum use	(+) Easy to use; discreet; higher immediate levels; can titrate to adjust for cravings; reduces self-reported withdrawal symptoms (-) Must abstain from drinking/eating during lozenge use
Adverse Effects	-Sleep disturbances -Local skin irritation -Bone pain -Headache -Nausea	-Local mouth irritation -Jaw pain -Hiccups -Dyspepsia -Rhinitis -Nausea	-Local mouth irritation/tingling -Heartburn, indigestion, nausea (if chewed) -Headache -Nausea, diarrhea -Flatulence
VA National Formulary Restrictions	None	None	None
VA Cost and Average (Avg) Cost Per Day Based on Above Regimens	All strengths: \$19.04/14patches \$1.36/patch avg: \$1.36/day	2mg gum: \$14.49/100 pieces \$0.15/piece avg: \$1.50/day 4mg gum \$17.49/100 pieces \$0.18 /piece avg: \$1.80/day	2mg or 4mg lozenge: \$40.03/108 lozenges \$0.37/lozenge avg: \$3.30/day
Contraindications/ Relative Contraindications	Relative Contraindications: -Hypersensitivity -Pregnancy: Category D -Use within 14 days post MI, or serious or worsening angina -Patients should be advised not to smoke while on nicotine replacement therapy		

*remove Nicotrol patch at bedtime.

†In general, smoking greater than 20 cigarettes per day or use of first cigarette within 30 minutes of awakening is considered high dependence.

‡all NRTs have been shown to double 6-12 month abstinence rates compared to placebo.

|| cost based on federal supply schedule (FSS) or BIG4 pricing as listed on the pharmacy benefits management (PBM) Web site available at: <http://www.pbm.va.gov/>.

Note: Two additional prescription products, a nicotine inhaler and nicotine nasal spray, are also Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved for nicotine replacement therapy; however, these products are not available on the VA National Formulary. For more information on these products, visit the American Lung Association Smoking Cessation Support Web site at: <http://www.lungusa.org/stop-smoking/about-smoking/health-effects/smoking.html>.

