

Patient Guide: Tobacco Cessation Therapy

VARENICLINE








Medication together with behavioral counseling gives you the best chance of quitting smoking

What does this medication do?

Varenicline (CHANTIX®) is used to help you quit smoking by blocking the pleasant effects of smoking on the brain and reducing withdrawal. It is recommended you participate in behavioral counseling when using this medication so as to increase your likelihood of staying smoke free.

How do I use it?

- ◆ Set a date on which you intend to stop smoking. The medicine needs to be started at least one week before your quit date. You may start the medication and then stop smoking within 1-2 weeks.
- ◆ The medication is typically used for 12-24 weeks if you are able to quit within the first few weeks of starting the medication. Even if you have already stopped smoking after 12 weeks of medication, your prescriber may keep you on this medication for up to another 12 weeks in order to prevent a return to smoking. You will also need monthly monitoring by your provider. Discuss with your provider.
- ◆ If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for the next dose, wait until then to use the medicine and skip the missed dose, do not double up.
- ◆ If you slip up and smoke while taking the medicine, don't give up. Continue to take the medicine and try not to smoke. Call your provider, a quit-smoking helpline or attend a tobacco cessation group to help you get back on track.

| | Day 1-3 | Day 4-7 | Day 8-14 Quit Day* | After Day 14* |
|------|---|---|---|---|
| 9 AM |  0.5 mg pill |  0.5 mg pill |  1 mg pill |  1 mg pill |
| 5 PM | |  0.5 mg pill |  1 mg pill |  1 mg pill |

*Set your quit date between day 8 and day 14. Continue taking varenicline for 12 weeks as advised by your provider.

What are the possible side effects?

- ◆ Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, constipation, headache, strange dreams and trouble sleeping.
- ◆ Nausea and vomiting may be relieved by taking the medicine with food and a full glass of water.
- ◆ It may take a few weeks to feel the full benefits of this medicine.
- ◆ This medicine may cause drowsiness, dizziness or problems with concentration. Make sure you know how you react to this medicine before you drive or use heavy machinery because of potential for loss of consciousness, seizures, muscle spasms, visual disturbances or hallucinations.
- ◆ If you experience serious types of allergic reactions - itching, rash, hive-like swelling, trouble breathing, or chest tightness - stop taking the medicine right away and contact your provider.
- ◆ This medicine may cause some people to become agitated, irritable, or display other abnormal behaviors. It may also cause some to become depressed or have suicidal thoughts/tendencies. Inform your family members or caregivers about the potential side effects of the medicine so that they can help monitor changes in your behavior. If you or your family member/caregiver notice any changes, during or even after treatment has ended, stop varenicline if it is still being taken and seek immediate attention.
Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1.
- ◆ If you have any heart conditions, discuss with your provider to make sure it is safe for you.