

## Advising on Cessation Medications

Disengaging in tobacco use can be difficult. Understanding treatment options and working with your health care provider to establish your treatment plan improves your chances to quit tobacco. Medication is an important part of treatment for most people trying to stop tobacco use. Using at least one medication when trying to stop smoking, vaping or chewing tobacco will significantly increase the likelihood of success. Approximately 60% of smokers succeed in quitting tobacco when American Lung Association’s Freedom From Smoking® program is paired with use of one or more cessation medications compared to only 13-17% of those who are successful with counseling alone.

“One size” does not fit all. What works for one person may not work for another. Talk with your health care provider about which medications may work best for you.

There are [7 FDA-approved medications](#) that are proven safe and effective to increase your chances of successfully breaking free from tobacco dependency. Those medications include:

FDA-Approved Cessation Medications					
Dosing/Duration	Medication	OTC	Rx	Contains Nicotine	Non-Nicotine
Long-Acting Medications	Nicotine Patch	■		■	
	Varenicline		■		■
	Bupropion		■		■
Short-Acting Medications	Nicotine gum	■		■	
	Nicotine lozenge	■		■	
	Nicotine nasal spray		■	■	
	Nicotine inhaler		■	■	

## Tips for Quitters Using Cessation Medications

- Once you choose which medication you want to try, obtain a script from your health care provider and fill it at the pharmacy counter, regardless of whether the medication is prescription or over the counter. Most insurance companies offer a tobacco cessation benefit to help with the cost of these medications.
- Consider a combination of long-acting and short-acting medication for maximum support throughout the day and as needed during those tough break-through cravings.
- If you have any undesirable symptoms associated with the use of the medications chosen, talk to your doctor right away and switch to something else. There are many medication options, rather than not using one because of side effects, try another as medication has been proven to increase/optimize cessation success.
- Monitor the intensity and frequency of your urges to use tobacco. Discuss with your healthcare provider to determine if you are using the best medications as you may find that you need a combination of long-acting plus short-acting or increased dosage.
- Use your quit medication as intended for the full duration advised by your health care provider. Stopping your medication early or not dosing it as instructed during your quit attempt puts you at risk of relapse back to tobacco use.

## Advising on Cessation Medications

When advising on cessation medications as a component of a comprehensive tobacco treatment plan, Freedom From Smoking® facilitators should advise program participants to:

1. **Consult with your doctor.** When a Freedom From Smoking® group program participant is considering using a cessation medication, the facilitator must ALWAYS advise that the participant speak directly with their primary care provider prior to moving forward with one of the options, even if the product they choose is available over the counter and does not require a prescription.
2. **Check with your Healthcare Plan Provider Regarding Available Tobacco Cessation Benefits.** The participant may have insurance benefits that would cover the cost of those products, even those available over the counter, when a script is provided by a physician and filled at the pharmacy.
3. **Provide additional support if the program participant doesn't have a primary care provider.** Freedom From Smoking® facilitators sometimes deal with the barrier of individuals not having a primary care provider who can write a script for pharmacotherapy (requirement of insurance). Options Facilitators may provide include:
  - a. Check to see if they have access to one of the following:
    - i. Dentist office (dental providers can write the script)
    - ii. Behavioral health/mental health office (mental health care providers have someone on staff who can write the script)
    - iii. Local health department (nurse practitioners within the local health departments can provide scripts if individual has been treated or provided services)
  - b. It is the practice of Freedom From Smoking® facilitators to encourage individuals to secure a primary care provider in their local area that would accept the insurance they have.
    - iv. If none of the above options are available, provide a referral list option for local area providers and health care facilities.
      1. Resource available to anyone for access: [usa.gov/doctors](https://www.usa.gov/doctors)
        - a. Counselors typically determine the zip code of the individual and provide a minimum of three referral options
      2. If uninsured, you can refer the individual to a local area community clinic (if accessible; depending on location) and they can also assist with scripts.
  - c. If you have questions or want to learn more, please contact the Lung HelpLine at [HelpLineinfo@Lung.org](mailto:HelpLineinfo@Lung.org).

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**For more information about quitting tobacco use,  
visit the American Lung Association website at [Lung.org](https://www.lung.org)  
or call the free Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872).**

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