

NRT Factsheet

What is NRT?

NRT is an abbreviation for nicotine replacement therapy. Nicotine replacement therapy is sometimes called therapeutic nicotine, medicinal nicotine, or nicotine reduction therapy.

What are the main types of NRT?

The NRT products that are available in Australia are:

- ▶ patches
- ▶ gum
- ▶ lozenges
- ▶ mini-lozenges
- ▶ inhalers

Patches deliver nicotine through the skin. The other products deliver nicotine through the mouth.

Why use nicotine after stopping smoking?

Nicotine replacement increases the odds of quitting smoking by around 60% compared to placebo. It reduces cravings for cigarettes and dampens nicotine withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, anxiety, depression and restlessness. The idea is to use “clean” nicotine, without the many additional toxins in tobacco smoke, for a limited period to “wean” yourself off cigarettes. Research indicates that nicotine is not a direct cause of tobacco-related disease. The main problem with nicotine delivered by cigarettes is that it causes people to breathe in tobacco smoke over long periods.

Do clients need willpower?

Self-control and determination are almost always needed to quit smoking. However, physical addiction to nicotine undermines willpower by distorting people’s motivation and giving an unhealthy priority to cigarettes. It is not a sign of weakness to use NRT for a time to help rebalance brain chemistry to increase the odds of quitting. Quitting smoking is a competition against cigarettes, not other people. It is better to do whatever it takes to get the job done, because cigarettes are lethal.

How do I help clients quit gradually using nicotine replacement?

For smokers who are not ready to quit straight away, using oral NRT products to gradually replace cigarettes over a period of weeks or months is helpful. Product guidelines recommend:

- ▶ reducing cigarettes by half over six weeks
- ▶ cutting out remaining cigarettes within six months
- ▶ using NRT as normal after the quit date.

How long should my client use NRT?

At least eight weeks’ use of NRT is recommended for best results. Not using NRT for long enough is generally more of a problem than using NRT for too long. Smokers should use NRT for as long as they require to feel 100% sure that they can give up smoking. A period of two weeks without cravings, withdrawal symptoms or strong temptations to smoke is sometimes used to assess if someone is ready to stop NRT. Some smokers may need to use NRT for months or even years in order to remain off cigarettes. Continuing smoking is a much bigger problem than long-term NRT use.

How much money do we need for NRT?

Steps to calculate the cost:

- ▶ How many clients?
- ▶ Chose the NRT that would best suit the client group
- ▶ Decide how long you would like to provide NRT

Example

= no. of clients x NRT cost/week x number of weeks
= 10 x \$8.90 x 8
= \$712



NRT	Client Group	Strength	Duration	Package cost	Approx. cost per week*	PBS Subsidised	Brands
Patch	> 10 cigarettes per day and weight >45kg	21mg/ 24 hr patch or 15mg / 16 hrs	>8 weeks	\$35.50–Adult/ 4 wks \$5.40–Conc./ 4 wks	\$8.90	Yes	Nicorette ® Nicabate P ® Nicotinell ® QuitX ® Amcal ®
	< 10 cigarettes per day or weight < 45kg or cardiocascular disease	14mg/ 24 patch or 10mg/16 hrs	>8 weeks		\$1.35	Yes	
Gum	First cigarette >30 mins after waking	2mg gum, 8–12 per day	>8 weeks	\$14.70/ 24 pieces \$62/ 105 pieces	\$51.45	No	Nicorette ® Nicabate P ® Nicotinell ® Pharmacycare ® Amcal ®
	First cigarette <30 mins after waking	4mg gum, 6–10 per day	>8 weeks		\$41.35	No	
Inhaler	Assessed as nicotine dependent	6–12 cartridges per day	>8 weeks	\$14/ four cartridges and one mouthpiece	\$294	No	Nicorette ®
				\$53/ 20 cartridges and two mouthpieces	\$222.60		
Lozenge	First cigarette >30 mins after waking	2mg lozenge, 1 lozenge every 1–2 hrs	>8 weeks	\$18/ 20 lozenge \$53/ 80 lozenges	\$100.80 \$74.20	No	Nicorette ® Amcal ®
	First cigarette <30 mins of waking	4 mg lozenge, 1 lozenge every 1–2 hrs	>8 weeks	\$19/ 20 mini lozenges \$49/ 60 mini lozenges	\$106.40 \$91.50	No	
Mouth Spray	Assessed as nicotine dependent	1mg per spray	>8 weeks	\$40 to \$55/ spray pump (150 doses, for a person who smokes 15 cigarettes a day, approx. last between four days to a week when used as recommended.)	\$96.25	No	Nicorette ® Nicabate P ® Nicotinell ® Amcal ® QuitX ®

*based on the highest recommended dosage rate to be conservative