

Nicotine Replacement Therapy Prescribing Protocol for patients with tobacco dependency admitted to hospital

All patients should be offered Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) at the point of hospital admission as the quickest method for alleviating cravings and withdrawal. In line with NICE guidance, NRT should be prescribed as a combination NRT (long-acting patch plus a short-acting form) to achieve the most successful outcomes.

Combination NRT is the NICE recommended standard and should be considered in all circumstances. However, specialist tobacco dependence advisors can consider tailoring NRT prescribing to individual patient requirements.

Step 1

Prescribe a long-acting nicotine patch

Ask the patient how soon they smoke from waking up. **If they answer:**

Under 30min

- Prescribe a **21mg/24hrs nicotine patch*** (warn of possible sleep disturbance)

Over 30min

- Prescribe a **25mg/16hrs nicotine patch****

*For pregnant women nicotine patches should be used for no more than 16hrs in any 24-hour period, remove patch at bedtime.

**Preferred if 24hr patch causes sleep disturbance or concerns over sleep disturbance

Step 2

Prescribe a short-acting nicotine product

- Discuss all options with the patient but ensure they are aware that short-acting nicotine is absorbed through the gums – let the nicotine rest in the mouth and absorb
- Try to avoid swallowing nicotine which will prevent absorption and cause dyspepsia
- Nicotine is relatively harmless and there is no need to worry about patient overdosing on it, but they can under-dose and still have cravings for tobacco – use regularly and as much as needed e.g. **on the hour every hour as well as whenever needed**

Devise	Dose	Use
Inhalator	15 mg per cartridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Puff' on it: absorbed through the gums• 10 puffs = 1 puff of a cigarette• On the hour every hour + cravings
Gum	4 mg per gum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Chew and park': chew until fiery taste then park• On the hour every hour + cravings
Lozenge	4 mg per lozenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suck like a sweet• Chew and park if heartburn or hiccups occur• On the hour every hour + cravings
Microtabs	2 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rest under the tongue - don't chew/swallow• On the hour every hour + cravings
Mouth spray	1 mg per spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spray under tongue or side of cheek, don't swallow• On the hour every hour + cravings
Nose spray	0.5 mg per spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spray both nostrils• Watery eyes, runny nose, sneezing should settle• On the hour every hour + cravings