

Nicotine Replacement Therapies:

Patch



- **For best results, make sure you start on the right dose.** The nicotine patch comes in three strengths: 7 mg, 14 mg and 21 mg. The right dose for you depends on how much you currently smoke. If you smoke more than 10 cigarettes per day, consider starting on the 21 mg patch. Do not use more than one patch per day or wear two patches at once unless directed to do so by your health care provider. If directed by your provider, you may use two to three patches per day. After 8 to 12 weeks of abstinence, you may lower the dose with the goal of stopping use of the patch completely.
- **Wear the nicotine patch for around 24 hours.** The patch can even be worn when showering or bathing. When you wake up, take off the old patch, wash the area, then put a fresh patch on clean skin and wear it for a full 24 hours. If you find that you are having vivid dreams or that your sleep is disturbed, you can take the patch off before bed and put a new one on the next morning.
- **Put the patch on clean, dry, hair-free skin on the upper body.** Suggested places to put the patch are the upper chest, upper arm, shoulder, back or inner arm. Each location should only be used once per week, so avoid putting the patch in the same spot until seven days have passed. Avoid areas of irritated, oily, scarred or damaged skin. When removing the patch from the foil package, peel off the protective layer and immediately apply the patch to your skin. Press down for about 4 seconds to ensure the patch sticks to your skin.

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- Wash your hands with soap and water after you apply the patch to wash away any nicotine from your fingers.
- When changing your patch, remove the patch carefully and dispose of it by folding it in half with the sticky sides together. Then apply a new patch to a different part of your upper body.
- **Keep out of reach of children and pets.** Nicotine gum, lozenges and patches – even used patches – may have enough nicotine to make children and pets sick. In case of accidental use or ingestion, contact a Poison Control Center right away at 800-222-1222.



Call **713-792-QUIT** or e-mail
QuitNow@MDAnderson.org to learn about
services offered by the Tobacco Treatment Program.

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