

Myths and Facts of Nicotine Replacement Therapies

Myth 1

Nicotine is the harmful substance in cigarettes.

Fact:

- ❖ Nicotine is **NOT** known to cause cancer.
- ❖ There are 4000 **other** chemicals in cigarettes and over 50 of these are known to cause cancer

Myth 2

Nicotine is addictive whether it is obtained through nicotine gum, the patch or cigarettes.

Fact:

- ❖ Nicotine is highly addictive when obtained through smoking because it reaches the brain in 7 to 10 seconds.
- ❖ The patch and gum release nicotine slowly into your body so there is almost no addictive potential

Myth 3

Nicotine replacement therapy is hazardous for smokers.

Fact:

- ❖ Nicotine replacement therapy is **safe** for smokers
- ❖ NRT delivers nicotine to the body without the dangerous poisons found in cigarettes and is a “clean” delivery

Myth 4

Smoking while on the patch can lead to a heart attack.

Fact:

- ❖ Smoking on the patch does **not** increase your risk of heart attack
- ❖ Heart attack, stroke and sudden death can be caused by the 4000 other chemicals in cigarettes.

Myth 5

Use of the nicotine patch or gum should not exceed 3 months.

Fact:

- ❖ Nicotine gum and the patch can be used as long as needed to help smokers reduce or quit

Myth 6

Nicotine gum or the patch should only be used if you intend to quit.

Fact:

- ❖ The gum and the patch can be used for people who are not ready to quit yet but would like to cut down

Myth 7

Clients with heart disease should not use the patch or the gum.

Fact:

- ❖ It is more dangerous for clients with heart disease to continue smoking than to use the patch or gum.
- ❖ Studies show that cardiac patients who used the patch and/or the gum were **not** found to have greater rates of death

Myth 8

Pregnant women should not use nicotine gum or the patch.

Fact:

- ❖ The patch and gum are **safer** than smoking
- ❖ Cigarette smoking increases the risk of miscarriage, premature birth as well as low birth rate
- ❖ Pregnant women should try to quit smoking using behavioural strategies first but should consider nicotine replacement therapy if they are not successful

Myth 9

Smokers under eighteen should not use nicotine replacement therapy.

Fact:

- ❖ The patch and the gum are safer than smoking and should be made available to all smokers who need it

Myth 10

Stop smoking medications are not effective in helping people quit.

Fact:

- ❖ The patch, nicotine gum and zyban have been found to approximately **double** quitting rates of smokers

Myth 11

The nicotine patch and gum should not be used at the same time. Zyban should not be used in combination with the gum or patch.

Fact:

- ❖ Using the gum and patch together has proved **more** effective than using the gum or patch alone.
- ❖ Zyban may be prescribed in combination with the patch or the gum.

Myth 12

Nicotine replacement should only be taken in recommended doses.

Fact:

- ❖ The nicotine replacement dose will vary according to each individual.
- ❖ Some smokers may suffer extreme withdrawal symptoms and will need more nicotine replacement

Myth 12

Enforced smoking abstinence such as hospitalizations often results in quitting.

Fact:

- ❖ Being forced not to smoke does **not** usually result in stopping smoking permanently