

The following guide suggests nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products based on levels of nicotine dependence

	Less than 10 cigarettes	10 - 20 cigarettes	20 - 30 cigarettes	More than 30 cigarettes
Smokes within 5 mins of waking	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
Smokes within 6 - 30 mins of waking	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
Smokes within 31 - 60 mins of waking	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Smokes after 60 mins of waking	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Low dependence. May benefit from using NRT occasionally.

NiQuitin CQ
2mg lozenge - mint

Medium dependence. If smoking at regular intervals during the day recommend a 24-hour patch applied for 16 hours and removed for 8 hours overnight. Alternatively with less regular smoking pattern suggest low strength intermittent product - (eg lozenge) where hand-to-mouth action of smoking is likely to be missed.

Nicotinell	NiQuitin CQ
14mg 24-hour patch (applied for 16 hours, removed for 8 hours overnight).	2 mg lozenge - mint

High dependence. Smoking regularly during the day and within 30 minutes of rising recommend a 24-hour patch. For intermittent and supplementary use, suggest full strength intermittent product (eg lozenge)

Nicotinell	NiQuitin CQ
21mg 24-hour patch	4mg lozenge - mint

In trials, a combination of two different NRTs was in general more effective than a single NRT (normally patch and another format).

Very High dependence. Products as for high dependence.

Prescribing Points

- See also NICE guidance on smoking cessation at <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=36976>
- Where a product has been started and is maintaining abstinence, consider continuing this product.
- All available NRT products are prescribable either on the advice of a smoking cessation specialist or if preferred by the patient for any other reason. If not, use the recommendations above.
- If using an intermittent product in very high dependence patients, the nasal spray provides the fastest delivery for nicotine.
- If using NRT in pregnant women, a 24-hour patch should be applied for 16 hours and removed for 8 hours overnight, to minimise fetal exposure

16-hour patch versus 24-hour patch: points to consider

- Both patches have been shown to be equally effective.
- 16-hour patch may mean less sleep disturbance and skin irritation
- The manufacturers of 24-hour patch state that a 24-hour patch is used to optimise the effect against morning cravings.
- Studies have shown that a higher percentage of relapses occur afternoon/evening and not morning.