

# Frequently Asked Questions



## FAQS

### Is nicotine safe?

A lot of people mistakenly think that nicotine is the dangerous part of smoking. Nicotine causes smoking to be addictive. But nicotine does not cause any disease. The harmful health effects of smoking are caused by burning tobacco, which produces thousands of harmful substances, including polyaromatic hydrocarbons which are the main cancer-causing chemicals in cigarette smoke.

### Does nicotine cause cancer?

No. Smoking tobacco causes cancer because cigarette smoke contains tar (from the tobacco plant), and many other chemicals that cause cancer. Nicotine makes smoking addictive, but it does not cause cancer.

### Is the inhaler safe?

Yes. The inhaler is safe to inhale. It has been approved by the Ministry of Health and the Standing Committee on Therapeutic Trials. The Inhaler allows you to inhale the rewarding nicotine without all the dangerous chemicals that are in cigarette smoke (e.g. polyaromatic hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde, acetone, toluene, and many more).

### Is the inhaler safe for the environment?

Yes. Our inhalers do not contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Your metered dose inhaler uses another substance, called hydrofluoroalkane (HFA), which is safe, effective, and environmentally friendly.

### What happens if I start smoking again?

Use the inhaler. Be positive! You are not a failure! Do not beat yourself up!

- Use the inhaler more often.
- Check your inhaler technique (see instruction sheet you were given or on our website).
- Wash and dry the actuator (the green plastic that the metal canister sits in) regularly to make sure the spray forms ideal sized droplets.
- Remember to put your patches on every day.

Don't worry we won't beat you up or tell you off or judge you. We will support you. Use the inhaler as much as you can, even if you are also smoking, it will help you to smoke less.

### What if I get strong urges to smoke?

Use the inhaler more often. Have more puffs each time you use it. Use it more times during the day. Always carry the inhaler with you. Check that you are using it the best way.

### Should I really use the inhaler a lot? What if I get too reliant on the inhaler?

Use the inhaler a lot. It is a tool to help you quit smoking. The more you use the tool, the more likely it is that you will be able to quit and stay quit. It is better to rely on the inhaler than to rely on cigarettes. Your chances of becoming addicted to the inhaler are very small, but isn't it better to be addicted to a safe inhaler than to be addicted to harmful smoking?

### Why should I keep using the inhaler for 6 months?

It is best to keep using the inhaler for 6 months, because you might still get urges to smoke, and the inhaler will take those urges away if you use it instead of smoking. If you keep using the inhaler for a long time, you will find it easier not to go back to smoking.

## **What can I do if I find the flavour of the inhaler too harsh?**

Use the inhaler more frequently to build up your taste tolerance. Some first time smokers find smoking is quite harsh too, but they persevere with it until it's no longer harsh. Some smokers who switch to a different brand of cigarettes find they're initially harsh, but they get used to it. Some first time users of the inhaler have a similar experience with the inhaler.

## **Why should I keep applying the patches for 5 months?**

The patches are great at making you feel less irritable, less anxious, less angry, and less hungry. The patches help you to concentrate, and help to improve your mood. If you stop them too soon you are more likely to go back to smoking.

## **Can I smoke and use the inhaler and patches at the same time for the first four weeks? Isn't that dangerous?**

It is safe to smoke and use the inhaler and patches at the same time. You will not overdose on nicotine. If you do get more nicotine in your body than usual, the worst that will happen is you may feel a bit nauseous and light-headed. Using the inhaler and patches before you quit smoking will help you to get used to the inhaler and become skilled with the inhaler, before you have to quit smoking. This will help you reduce your smoking, and help you to quit.

## **Should I really wear the patch overnight?**

Yes. Patches work best if you wear them 24 hours a day:

- your cigarettes will be less enjoyable, and easier to give up;
- helps reduce irritability, anxiety, hunger;
- you will have reduced urges to smoke when you wake up in the morning.

If you get unpleasant vivid dreams from wearing the patches overnight, persevere with this for a few nights because they often stop once you get used to the patches. But, if they don't go away, then take the patches off one hour before going to sleep, but make sure your inhaler is handy to use first thing after waking up the next morning because your nicotine levels will be low if you haven't worn patches overnight and you will have a strong craving for cigarettes/inhaler.

## **Why do I still feel like smoking an hour after I use the inhaler?**

That's normal. Just use the inhaler every time you get an urge to smoke. Remember, if you smoke 20 cigarettes per day, and you are awake for 16 hours a day, you must smoke every 48 minutes (on average). So cigarettes only stop your craving for 48 minutes. In the same way, the inhaler can only stop your craving for a short time, just like cigarettes. So use the inhaler often.

## **What if I feel like I'm overdosing on nicotine?**

Smoke less. Do not stop using your patches and do not stop using your inhaler. You will feel unwell if you do overdose (nausea, lightheaded and headache). Phone or email us and we can provide you with some patches with less nicotine in them (Step 2 or Step 3 patches).

## **If I'm allergic to the patches what should I do?**

Make sure that every day you put the patch on a different area of skin, to give your skin a rest. You can put your patches anywhere, on your arms, back, chest, stomach, legs. If need be, contact us to get lower dose patches (Step 2 or Step 3 patches).

## **Is it safe to wear the patches on my chest close to my heart?**

Yes. The nicotine from the patch is absorbed into the skin in your chest, and gets into the small veins in your skin and carried through those veins to the big veins that carry all the blood from the rest of your body back to your heart. That is the same as what happens when you put the patch on your arm. If you put a

patch on your chest, the nicotine cannot go directly to your heart because it is very deep, beneath all your layers of skin, the rib-cage, and a strong sac around your heart.

### **Will I gain weight when I quit smoking?**

Not everyone gains weight when they quit. Studies show that using nicotine replacement therapy for the recommended time can reduce the amount of post-cessation weight gain. So, keep inhaling your inhaler and wearing your patches. Use the inhaler to suppress your appetite. If you do find your appetite has increased, have healthy snacks on hand such as fruit and vegetables and use that extra energy you have by increasing your physical activity.

### **Why do half the participants in this trial have to have a placebo inhaler?**

If everyone in the trial used the active inhaler (contains nicotine) then we would not be able to prove that the reason they all did so well at quitting was just because of a placebo effect and had nothing to do with the nicotine in the inhaler. To show that it is the nicotine in the inhaler that is helping people to quit, we have to show that quit rates with active nicotine inhalers are higher than quit rates with a placebo (no-nicotine) inhaler.

### **What should I do if I think I've been randomised to use the placebo inhaler?**

It might not be that easy to tell if you are on the active or placebo inhaler, for three reasons. Firstly, you might not be using the optimal technique for inhaling (see the 'how to enjoy your inhaler' link). Secondly, everyone in the trial is getting active nicotine patches, which will make it difficult for you to judge whether there is nicotine in the inhaler. Thirdly, although the active inhaler is very similar in its sensory effects to those of smoking, they aren't quite the same (the inhaler doesn't feel the same when you hold it, it won't give you quite the same sensations in your mouth and throat when you inhale it) and therefore it will take a while for your brain to learn to respond to nicotine in the absence of exactly the same sensory effects of smoking. If you do decide you are using a placebo inhaler, please don't just abandon the trial – please phone or email us to let us know, and we will help to get alternative support.

**Inhale often and regularly**

**Enjoy your inhaler**

**The inhaler: it's your choice**

**[www.otago.ac.nz/inhale](http://www.otago.ac.nz/inhale)**