

A guide for patients - Using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) while on Addenbrooke's site

This information is aimed at providing information on Nicotine Replacement Therapy for patients who wish to commence NRT during their admission.

Why is Addenbrooke's a smoke free site?

Following public consultation, Addenbrooke's site (boundaries of Long Road, Babraham Road, Robinson Way, bus station and car parks included) will become smoke free on 8 March 2006. This means that all patients, visitors and staff are no longer allowed to smoke within the hospital or its grounds.

This policy has been developed because:

- the public health white paper, Choosing Health, makes a clear commitment to a smoke free NHS by the end of 2006.
- second hand smoke, which is breathing other people's tobacco smoke, has now been shown to cause lung cancer and heart disease in non smokers, as well as many other illnesses (www.rcplondon.ac.uk).

Patients and visitors who refuse to comply with this policy may be asked to leave the site.

What is Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)?

Most regular smokers are addicted to nicotine. When you give up smoking, even for a short while, your body misses the nicotine. NRT helps you to give up or stop smoking for a short while by replacing some of the nicotine so that you don't have strong withdrawal symptoms.

We ask that all patients who smoke at home bring their own NRT products into hospital with them. These products include:

- patches
- gum
- lozenges
- inhaler
- spray

They are widely available from chemists and supermarkets and your GP can also prescribe them for you. Also, if you forget to bring any NRT into the hospital or run out whilst in hospital, the shops on the hospital concourse sell NRT products to patients and their relatives.

Please note that all forms of NRT come in different strengths, it is therefore important that you read the leaflets that accompany the product.

If you are admitted as an emergency, please ask a friend or relative to bring in NRT for you. Alternatively, you can purchase it from the shops on the hospital concourse.

The Board of Directors has considered providing NRT for smokers. Unfortunately, the financial impact of this would mean that monies would be diverted from direct patient care, and is therefore not possible.

Using NRT

If you wish to start using NRT, the following points are very important:

- **Please read the information leaflet found inside your box of NRT patches or gum, as well as this sheet.**
- If you have any further questions please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist
- NRT is available in different strengths. You must make sure you use a strength appropriate to you.

Smoking Cessation support

For information and support on stopping smoking, phone the NHS smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169 / <http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/> or contact your GP.

Special Patient Groups

If any of the following special groups apply to you, please read the following information carefully.

Women who are pregnant

Stopping smoking is possibly the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and the health of your unborn baby. You should give up as early as possible in pregnancy, because smoking during pregnancy can result in poor growth of your baby. It can also lead to premature births and even stillbirths.

Ideally you should try to give up smoking without the use of NRT, but if you can't manage this, you can use NRT. The risks to your unborn baby are far less than from continuing to smoke.

www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/Smoking_Pregnancy

Women who are breastfeeding

Second hand tobacco smoke causes breathing difficulties and other problems in babies and children. Nicotine from smoking and from NRT is found in breast milk. However, the amount of nicotine from NRT that your child may receive during breastfeeding is much smaller. It is also less harmful than the second hand smoke they would breathe in if you continue to smoke.

If you are breastfeeding it is better if you **use gum rather than patches** and not use them just before breastfeeding. If you have a partner or other family member who also smoke, try to encourage them to give up smoking with you.

People with diabetes

Smokers who have diabetes have a much higher risk of heart disease, so it is very important to stop smoking. Nicotine from smoking and from NRT affects your blood sugar levels, so when you stop smoking these can vary more than usual. Therefore, monitor your sugar more regularly than usual, as you may need to make changes to your diet, your insulin or the amount of medication you take.

Diabetes UK: www.diabetes.org.uk

People with heart disease or stroke

If you have been in hospital because you have had a heart attack, stroke or serious problem with irregular heartbeats, you will have been encouraged to give up smoking without using NRT. Now that you are well enough to leave hospital, you can use NRT to help you stop smoking. You should tell your doctor that you are going to use NRT, and follow his/her advice.

British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk

The Stroke Association: www.stroke.org.uk

People with serious kidney or liver problems

If your doctor has told you that your kidney or liver is not working properly, consult your doctor before starting to use NRT to help you stop smoking.

British Liver Trust: www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

Young people (12 to 17 years)

For many young people smoking is already a habit. If you are smoking every day it may not be possible to quit without some help, so NRT can be helpful. You can use NRT for up to 12 weeks. Before you think about using NRT for longer you should talk to a health-care professional such as a pharmacist, smoking cessation advisor, nurse or doctor.

www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/Young_people_smoking

Disposing of NRT products

In small children high doses of nicotine are dangerous and can be fatal. For these reasons products containing nicotine should be kept out of the reach and sight of children at all times. All NRT products should be disposed of with care. Used patches should be folded in half with the adhesive side innermost and disposed of with care.

Taking other medications

Smoking can affect the blood levels of some medications. This is because the toxins in the smoke are taken up into the blood and can affect the way the body handles and removes medications from the body. So when you stop smoking these levels might change. There are a small number of medicines where this is really important.

Please ensure that you let the doctors who are looking after you, know that you are using nicotine replacement therapy and if you normally smoke.

If you have any questions about stopping smoking or about NRT products please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or phone the national Quitline on: 0800 169 0 169.



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. Please do not smoke anywhere on the site.
For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169