

Hoping to give up the habit?

Although most people try to quit smoking “cold turkey,” only about 5 percent succeed on each attempt. Here’s a comparison of some of the most common therapies and their per-attempt chance of success:

OVER THE COUNTER

	Dose	Advantages	Disadvantages/ Possible side effects	Chance of quitting for at least 6 months
Patch (Nicoderm CQ, Nicotrol)	1 patch over 16 or 24 hours	Steady level of nicotine Easy to use Unobtrusive	Cannot adjust dose midday Insomnia Skin irritation	9%
Gum (Nicorette)	1 piece per hour	User controls dose Offers oral substitute	Proper chewing technique necessary Can damage dental work Can cause mouth irritation, indigestion, sore jaw, hiccups	8%
Lozenge (Commit)	7-9 pieces per day	User controls dose Easier to use than gum Does not damage dental work	Mouth irritation	10%

PRESCRIPTION-ONLY (all covered by Medicaid)

Vapor inhaler (Nicotrol inhaler)	6-16 cartridges per day	User controls dose Hand-to-mouth substitute for cigarettes	Frequent puffing needed Visible when used Can cause mouth and throat irritation, cough	11%
Nasal spray (Nicotrol NS)	1-2 doses per hour	User controls dose Most rapid nicotine delivery Highest nicotine levels	Most irritating of the nicotine products Visible when used Can cause sneezing, cough, teary eyes, nasal irritation	13%
Bupropion SR (Zyban, Wellbutrin SR)	1-2 pills per day	Easy-to-take pill No nicotine exposure	Can cause insomnia, dry mouth Slight seizure risk (.1 %)	10%
Varenicline (Chantix)	1-2 pills per day	Easy-to-take pill No nicotine exposure	Can cause frequent nausea	16%

SOURCES: Dr. Nancy A. Rigotti, Cochrane Database of Systemic Reviews, Jan. 2004 and Jan. 2007.