

# GUIDELINES FOR USING THE NICOTINE TRANSDERMAL PATCH

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## **Patient Selection:**

- Patient must be motivated to quit and willing to set a quit date.
- Use when significant nicotine dependence is present:
  - more than 20 cigarettes smoker per day.
  - withdrawal symptoms during previous quit attempts.
  - first cigarette smoked within 30 minutes after awaking.
- Avoid in the presence of:
  - pregnancy or breast feeding.
  - acute MI, CVA, TIA, uncontrolled angina.
  - allergy to adhesive.

## **Prescribing Guidelines:**

- Starting Dose:
  - choose 21 mg patch Habitrol or Nicoderm patch; 15 mg Nicotrol patch, if patient:
    - smokes more than 10 cigarettes per day.
    - weighs more than 100 pounds.
    - has no active cardiovascular disease.
  - otherwise choose 14 mg Habitrol or Nicoderm patch; 10 mg Nicotrol patch.
- Patient uses first patch on morning of quit day.
  - (Do not use to help patient cut down).
- Taper before discontinuing.
  - starting dose for 4-6 weeks.
  - taper to next lower dose for 2-4 weeks.
- If relapse occurs (more than 6 cigs/day for a week or more):
  - discontinue patch.
  - encourage patient to pick new quit day; resume patch on quit day.
  - if repeated relapse occurs, consider intensifying support, providing behavioral counseling; or referring.

## **Supportive Materials/Interventions:**

- Provide self-help materials from pharmaceutical companies or voluntary organizations (e.g., NCI's Manual, ALA's Freedom from Smoking).
- Schedule follow-ups, visits or phone calls. Consider use of office staff.

## **Side Effects:**

- Skin reactions - erythema common, edema 3-4%, dropouts from reactions 2-6%.
- Insomnia, disturbing dreams - probably due to overnight nicotine levels.

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