

VARENICLINE

Varenicline is a nicotine receptor agonist (relieves cravings by releasing dopamine in the brain) and antagonist (prevents the feeling of pleasure during smoking). It is a highly effective treatment for tobacco addiction. Additional nicotine is required in the first 1-2 weeks of varenicline. As an inpatient in a smokefree environment this can be given alongside nicotine replacement therapy.

- 0.5mg Day 1-3
- 0.5mg twice daily day 4-7
- 1mg twice daily day 8 – end of treatment (12 weeks)

Side effects include nausea (minimise by having with food and water), sleep disturbance and vivid dreams. Stopping smoking can exacerbate pre-existing mental health illness regardless of treatment used. Care should be taken with patients with a history of psychiatric illness and varenicline should only be used in patients with a Mental Health diagnosis who are on stable treatment (i.e. no dosage changes or commencement of new medications in the last 3 months).

Caution:

Stopping smoking can increase plasma levels of theophylline, clozapine and olanzepine and patients should be advised to monitor for signs of toxicity. This is due to components of cigarette smoke that stimulate cytochrome P450. Doses may need to be adjusted. Seek specialist advice.

In particular seek specialist advice from the CURE team or on call psychiatry team in patients taking clozapine.

Remember to provide smokers with the following brief advice:

The very best chance of stopping smoking is with the help of medications and specialist support; both are readily available at this hospital

We will support those trying not to smoke by maintaining smokefree hospital grounds

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THE CURE PROJECT
CURING TOBACCO ADDICTION IN GREATER MANCHESTER



Two simple questions to assess a smoker's level addiction:

1 How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?

2 How long have you been awake before you smoke your first cigarette?

Low Level Addiction ≤ 10 Cigarettes/day



Prescribe a short acting nicotine replacement ("reach for" nicotine)
Advise patients to use short acting nicotine frequently and when cravings occur

First line:

- Nicotine lozenges 2mg as required

usual maximum 15 in 24 hours

Options if patient would prefer an alternative short acting NRT

- Nicotine inhalator 15mg/cartridge

maximum 6 cartridges in 24 hours

- Nicotine microtabs 2mg as required

usual maximum 24 in 24 hours

Discuss Varenicline with all smokers - see varenicline section

Advice for patients on short acting nicotine

Inhalator: The user 'puffs' on the device so the medication enters the mouth and is absorbed through the gums. It is not inhaled into the lungs.

Lozenges: Suck like a sweet to release the nicotine which is then absorbed through the gums. If the patient suffers heartburn, nausea or hiccups (nicotine being swallowed) then try parking the lozenge between the lip and gum.

Microtabs: Place under the tongue and allow to dissolve. They are not chewed, sucked or swallowed.

Moderate Level Addiction 10-19 Cigarettes/day



Prescribe a long acting nicotine patch AND CONSIDER adding a short acting "reach for" nicotine replacement.

- Nicotine Patches 14mg/24 hour

(Smokes within 30 minutes of waking)

- Nicotine Patches 15mg/16 hour

(Does NOT smoke within 30 minutes of waking)

- Short acting nicotine replacement

(As per low level addiction pathway)

Discuss Varenicline with all smokers - see varenicline section

Advice for patients Patches

Advise patients to use a clean & hairless area of skin to apply the patch. Skin irritation can occur but is generally mild

24 hour patches are ideal for patients that smoke within 30 minutes of waking but can cause sleep disturbance.

High Level Addiction ≥20 Cigarettes/day



Prescribe a long acting nicotine patch AND a short acting "reach for" nicotine replacement. Discuss the following options with the patient:

- Nicotine Patches 21mg/24 hour

(Smokes within 30 minutes of waking)

- Nicotine Patches 25mg/16 hour

(Does NOT smoke within 30 minutes of waking)

- Short acting nicotine replacement

(As per low level addiction pathway)

Discuss Varenicline with all smokers - see varenicline section

Advice for patients Patches

Advise patients to use a clean & hairless area of skin to apply the patch. Skin irritation can occur but is generally mild

24 hour patches are ideal for patients that smoke within 30 minutes of waking but can cause sleep disturbance.