

Varenicline (also called Chantix®)

Varenicline, also known as Chantix®, is a smoking medication that does not contain nicotine. It may be the most effective medication treatment currently available to help people stop smoking.

Varenicline blocks the pleasure associated with smoking and treats nicotine withdrawal. Varenicline should not be used with nicotine replacement medications (the patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler, or nasal spray), and can only be obtained with a prescription.

Varenicline is usually started one to two weeks before the day you plan to quit (called the Quit Date). It is recommended that varenicline be taken for three to six months. Some people get nausea when they take varenicline, so it is recommended that you always take it with food. Other possible side effects include abnormal dreams, insomnia (trouble sleeping), and constipation.



Varenicline should be used exactly as prescribed. This medication may not be used if you have a serious kidney disease (or you are receiving kidney/renal dialysis treatments).

Some people taking varenicline have reported changes in mood or agitation happened, but in a large double-blind placebo controlled study¹, the risk for these side effects was no greater than individuals who received nicotine patch, bupropion or even placebo while trying to quit smoking. Discuss this with your prescriber or counselor and report any side effects to your prescriber immediately.

¹ Anthenelli RM, Benowitz NL, West R, St Aubin L, McRae T, Lawrence D, Ascher J, Russ C, Krishen A, Evins AE. Neuropsychiatric safety and efficacy of varenicline, bupropion, and nicotine patch in smokers with and without psychiatric disorders (EAGLES): a double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *Lancet*. 2016 Jun 18;387(10037):2507-20.