

Title: Varenicline (Chantix) Therapy for Smoking Cessation

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Abstract: Varenicline (Chantix) can reduce the chance of relapse when attempting to quit smoking. This pamphlet describes the pharmacology of nicotine addiction, the benefits of varenicline therapy, and possible side effects.

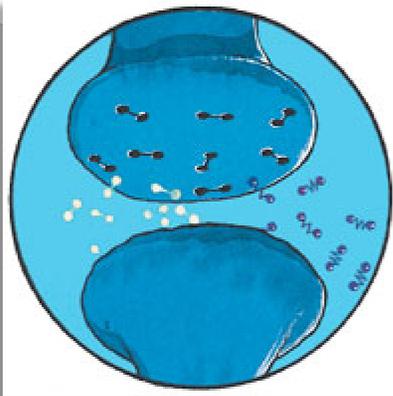
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## How smoking affects you

When you take a puff on a cigarette, nicotine moves into your bloodstream through your lungs. Nicotine affects many parts of your body. It can increase your heart rate and blood pressure, and change your breathing patterns.

Nicotine also attaches to receptors on the nerve cells in your brain. While it affects many different parts of your brain, nicotine especially activates the parts of your brain that produce pleasure.

After you have smoked for a long time, your body and brain develop a tolerance for nicotine. Eventually, you can become addicted. Then, if you stop smoking, your brain notices that nicotine is missing. When this happens, you feel a craving. This is why it's hard to quit smoking.



## How varenicline can help you quit

Varenicline is a pill that you take twice a day. It contains an ingredient that attaches to receptors in your brain, the same way that nicotine does.

Cravings are what you feel when your brain receptors are used to having nicotine attached to them. When varenicline attaches to your brain receptors instead, it can help satisfy your craving.

Varenicline also helps you quit by “blocking” nicotine. If you smoke, nicotine tries to attach to your brain receptors, but varenicline is already there. This reduces the pleasure that you feel when you smoke.

In one study, 44% of patients using varenicline were able to stop smoking for at least 12 weeks, vs. 18% taking a sugar pill.

## More ways to help you quit

Quitting smoking is hard, even with varenicline. You may be more likely to succeed if you also have other kinds of help, such as

- cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
- coaching.
- check-in calls.

To find out whether these strategies might help you, talk to your doctor.

Varenicline can be expensive, although for most people it is about as costly as one pack of cigarettes per day. Some health plans cover varenicline. Check with your insurance company.

## Side effects and warnings

When people take varenicline to quit smoking, the most common side effect is nausea. Some people also have trouble sleeping when taking varenicline, or have strange dreams or nightmares.

In rare cases, people taking varenicline become depressed, suicidal, or aggressive. This may be more likely if you already have a mental illness. If you do, tell your doctor.

Tell your doctor if you have kidney disease, because you might need a smaller dose of varenicline.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or could become pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding.

## More information

If you have questions, talk to your doctor. You can also find information and help on the web.

National Institutes of Health – Smoking Cessation  
[health.nih.gov/topic/SmokingCessation](http://health.nih.gov/topic/SmokingCessation)

Pfizer, Inc. [www.chantix.com](http://www.chantix.com)



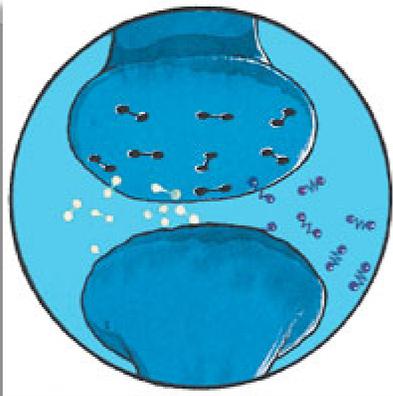
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Will it help you stop smoking?

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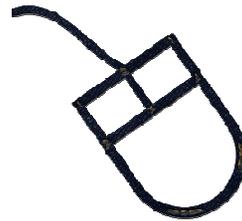
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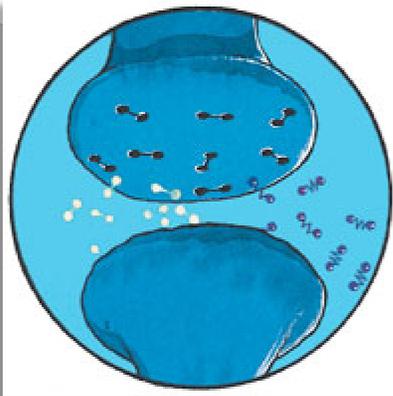
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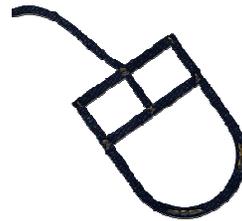
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