



What you need to know about...

Prescription Medication: Bupropion (Wellbutrin SR®, Zyban®)



Bupropion

Type: Long-acting medicine

Brands: Wellbutrin SR®, Zyban®, generics

Cost: About \$3-7 per day, \$90-210 per month

How does bupropion work?

- Bupropion is an extended-release prescription anti-depressant that also helps people quit smoking. It's been shown to work equally well in people with or without a history of depression.
- This medication acts on chemicals in the brain related to nicotine craving.
- The recommended period for use is at least 12 weeks, beginning 1-2 weeks before the quit date. Health care providers may suggest shorter or longer treatments for patients depending upon individual needs. Follow his or her instructions.
- For heavy smokers, bupropion may be used along with the nicotine patch, gum or lozenge.

What are the directions for use?

- For the first three days of therapy, users should take 150mg every morning. Beginning on day four, users should increase dosage to 150mg twice daily.
- An interval of 8 hours between daily doses is recommended.
- Because bupropion comes in extended-release form, tablets should not be crushed.

What are the advantages?

- Bupropion is easy to use and does not contain nicotine.
- This medication can be used in conjunction

with nicotine replacement therapy.

Are there any disadvantages?

- Bupropion requires a prescription.
- This medication does not get rid of symptoms right away.

What are the side-effects?

- Some users have experienced insomnia, dry mouth, shakiness and skin rash.

What precautions are associated with Bupropion?

- Though rare, changes in behavior, hostility, depression, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide have been reported with the use of bupropion.*
- People with a history of seizures, heavy alcohol use, serious head injury, anorexia or bulimia should not take bupropion.
- The FDA classified bupropion as a category "C" drug (possibly unsafe) for use during pregnancy. Pregnant women who smoke should discuss using bupropion with their health care provider.
- Bupropion should not be taken if taking other prescriptions for Wellbutrin or MAO-inhibitors.
- The consumption of alcohol should be avoided while taking this medication.

**In July 2009, the FDA mandated that prescribing information for all bupropion-containing products include a black-boxed warning highlighting the risk of serious neuropsychiatric symptoms.*

These are a few of the most common side-effects and interactions. If you have questions or have problems when using this medicine, contact your doctor/pharmacist.

Adapted from Asthma and COPD Center at the University of Chicago and from Pharmacological Product Guide: FDA-Approved Medications, The Regents of the University of California, August 2009.