



Prescription Medication: Nicotine Inhaler (Nicotrol® Inhaler)



Nicotine Inhaler

Type: Short-acting medicine
Brands: Nicotrol® Inhaler, no generics
Cost: About \$5 per day, \$150 per month

How the nicotine inhaler work?

- Nicotine inhalers help users stop smoking by taking the edge off cigarette cravings without providing the other harmful substances found in cigarettes.
- The inhaler is a thin plastic tube with a nicotine cartridge inside. When users puff on the inhaler, the cartridge delivers nicotine vapor into the mouth. The nicotine is absorbed through the lining in the mouth and throat.
- The recommended dose is between six and 16 cartridges per day, for up to 12 weeks, but can vary per user. The dose should be gradually reduced over the subsequent six to 12 weeks until the inhaler is no longer needed. Your health care provider may suggest shorter or longer treatments for you. Follow his or her instructions.

What are the directions for use?

- People who are trying to quit should use the inhaler when having a cigarette craving. After puffing, users should hold the vapor in their mouth for a few seconds and then blow it out — don't inhale it into the lungs.
- Users can consume one cartridge all at once or puff on it a few minutes at a time until the nicotine is finished. The best effect is reached through continuous puffing for 20 minutes.
- While using this medication, avoid food and acidic drinks before and during use.
- Do not smoke during use.

What are the advantages?

- Nicotine inhalers mimic the hand-to-mouth

behavior of smoking, which may be helpful for some.

What are the disadvantages to nicotine inhalers?

- Nicotine inhalers can be costly, and there are no generic forms currently on the market.
- This medication also requires a prescription.

What are the side-effects?

- Some users have experienced irritation of the throat and mouth, cough and upset stomach.

What precautions are associated with the nicotine inhaler?

- Nicotine inhalers are not appropriate for people who have lung diseases such as asthma.
- The FDA classified the nicotine inhaler as a category "D" drug (high risk to the fetus) for use during pregnancy. Pregnant women who smoke should discuss using the nicotine inhaler with their health care providers.

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 the 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.