

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Varenicline for smoking cessation

NICE 'technology appraisal guidance' advises on when and how drugs and other treatments should be used in the NHS.

This leaflet is about when **varenicline** should be used in the NHS in England and Wales to help people stop smoking. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence). It is written for people who want to give up smoking but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in stopping smoking.

It does not describe treatments to help with stopping smoking in detail – your doctor or nurse should discuss these with you. Some sources of further information and support are inside this leaflet.



This may not be the only possible treatment to help you to stop smoking. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

Varenicline is recommended as a possible treatment to help smokers who have said they want to stop smoking.

Varenicline should normally be used only as part of a programme that includes advice from a healthcare professional or other types of support.

Giving up smoking

There are several different types of help available for people who want to give up smoking. For example, you can get advice and support from healthcare professionals, and use nicotine patches or gum or take a medication called bupropion.

Varenicline

Varenicline works by reducing a person's craving for a cigarette and by reducing the effects they feel if they do have a cigarette. The person sets a date to stop smoking, and starts taking varenicline tablets 1 or 2 weeks before this date. Treatment normally lasts for 12 weeks.

What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must ensure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued. So, if you want to stop smoking, and your doctor thinks that varenicline is the right treatment for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. Please see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance if you appear to be eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

More information about stopping smoking

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people who want to give up smoking. Please note that NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), www.ash.org.uk
- QUIT, Quitline 0800 00 22 00, www.quit.org.uk
- The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, 08712 20 54 26, www.fagends.org

NHS Direct online (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) may be a good starting point for finding out more. Your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) may also be able to give you further advice and support.

About NICE

NICE produces advice (guidance) for the NHS about preventing, diagnosing and treating different medical conditions. The guidance is written by independent experts including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider all the research on the disease or treatment, talk to people affected by it, and consider the costs involved. Staff working in the NHS are expected to follow this guidance.

To find out more about NICE, its work and how it reaches decisions, see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance

This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/TA123

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from the NHS Response Line (phone 0870 1555 455 and quote reference N1285).