

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHANTIX-VARENICLINE

Chantix is a non-nicotine pill that you take for 12 weeks that has helped millions of people quit smoking. Chantix partially stimulates the brain like nicotine and it also has a blocking effect so cigarettes do not feel the same while you are taking the medication. Chantix works by releasing dopamine, the pleasure chemical in your brain to help with signs of withdrawal, like crankiness and trouble concentrating. Chantix also blocks cigarettes from having the effect you are used to, so your wish to smoke will most likely decrease.

Chantix has been used safely since 2007. It was thought that in very rare cases people taking Chantix may have serious suicidal thoughts and erratic behavior. After 10 years of safe and successful use by millions of people, the FDA removed Chantix from its “black box warning list last year. However, it does still requires a prescription from your doctor. It is not automatically covered by Medi-Cal-- you may need to have tried and failed other quit smoking methods first. It is covered by Medicare with a Prior Authorization form, depending on your plan.

HOW DO I GET READY TO USE CHANTIX?

1. Talk to your doctor about using Chantix, especially about:

- Any mental health condition that you have had before taking Chantix. Chantix may be linked to mental health problems like mood changes, erratic behavior and suicidal thoughts in some users.
- Kidney problems or if you are on dialysis
- Heart Disease
- Don't use Chantix if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant soon or breast feeding

2. Get Chantix while preparing to quit before your quit day.

- Chantix comes in a 30 day supply. Be sure to get more before you run out. Call your pharmacy.
- Start taking Chantix the week (up to 2 weeks) before you quit so you have some help even before you quit.
- Chantix comes in 0.5mg (white) or 1mg (blue) tablets. Most doctors prescribe a 12 week program.

| Duration | Dosage |
|------------|--------------------|
| Days 1-3 | 1 x 0.5 mg (white) |
| Days 4-7 | 2 x 0.5 mg (white) |
| Weeks 2-12 | 2 x 1 mg (blue) |

DO NOT TAKE MORE THAN 2mg PER DAY

How do I use Chantix?

Before taking Chantix read all of the instructions carefully. If you have any questions, talk to your health care provider.

- Start a week before quit day (up to 2 weeks) or as directed by your doctor.
- Chantix can cause nausea. To help decrease nausea, take your first dose with breakfast or some food in the morning and drink 2 glasses of water with the pill. Take your second dose with dinner or some food in the evening and drink 2 glasses of water.
- Try to link taking the pills to something you automatically do - like brushing your teeth - to help you remember. If you miss a pill wait until the next dose—Do not double up without doctor's advice.

Tips:

- **Don't stop using Chantix before the recommended time.** Even if you feel better in a couple of days, continue to use Chantix. It will keep you comfortable and reduce cravings as you are quitting. It is important to use Chantix for the full 12 weeks (3 months) as recommended. Some people may benefit from using it up to 6 months.
- Smoking cigarettes while using Chantix may prevent you from quitting smoking. If you continue to smoke or have urges to smoke while using Chantix, work with your doctor, or cessation counselor to find other tips to let go of triggers.
- Studies show that using Chantix for at least 3 months is recommended, providing you tolerate any side effects. This gives you time to adjust to all aspects of your non-smoking life. Even after 3 months you may still need to take Chantix. Most plans will pay for Chantix for up to 6 six months on a month to month basis. Talk to your Provider or Pharmacist to stay on Chantix for longer than 3 months.

Side Effects of Chantix

Nausea, headache, vomiting, gas, trouble sleeping, vivid dreams, changes in how food tastes. Most of these side effects get better as your body adjusts to the medication and withdrawal of nicotine.

Rarely some people feel agitation, depression and suicidal thoughts. May interfere with ability to drive and manage machinery.

If you are taking Chantix and have any of these problems you should stop right away and contact your doctor or other health professional