

Varenicline (Chantix®)

Description: For more complete information, please refer to the FDA package insert.

Varenicline is a quit-smoking medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration. It does not contain any nicotine. It is available as Chantix® and only by prescription. You can use it for up to 12 weeks. An additional 12 weeks may be recommended by your provider after successful cessation to help maintain abstinence.

How Well Does It Work?	Studies have shown that Chantix increases short and long-term quit rates when compared to a placebo. Some evidence suggests varenicline is the most effective monotherapy available for smoking (Fiore, 2010)
Warnings	Precautions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suicidal thoughts, aggressive and erratic behavior, drowsiness: The Food and Drug Administration revised the warnings and precautions for varenicline (Chantix®) on February 1, 2008. Because there may be an association between Chantix and serious neuropsychiatric symptoms including suicidal ideation, attempted and completed suicide, changes in behavior, agitation, and depressed mood, they recommend that healthcare professionals monitor patients for behavior or mood changes (FDA 2009b). Patients should also be asked about history of

	<p>psychiatric illness. Patients on the medication who experience these symptoms should contact their doctors. The manufacturers of these drugs must also describe these risks in the medication guide of each product. See FDA Patient Information Sheet [2].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diabetes, asthma, and blood thinners: Consult with your doctor about whether you need to change the dosage of the drugs you take for these conditions, once you quit smoking.• Pregnancy, breast feeding: Your doctor will compare the risks of taking any medications during pregnancy or breast-feeding versus the benefits.• Kidney problems: This medication may not be right for you if you have kidney problems or your doctor may approach its use cautiously.
Side Effects	<p>Possibly suicidal thoughts, aggressive and erratic behavior, drowsiness (See Warnings above.)</p> <p>Nausea, headache, vomiting, flatulence, insomnia, abnormal dreams, dysgeusia (altered taste) (USFDA, 2006)</p>

How Do I Take This Medication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As always, talk to your doctor about this and any medication and how you should take it.• Start taking the medication 1 week prior to your quit date.• Take one of the lower dose tablets (0.5 mg) in the morning for 3 days• Then take a lower dose tablet in the morning and evening for 4 days• Then take a full dose tablet (1 mg) morning and evening• Stay on medication for a total of 12 weeks. See your doctor regarding extending beyond the 12 weeks after successful cessation.
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[2] <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/PostmarketDrugSafetyInformationforPatientsandProviders/ucm106540.htm>