

Your 12-week guide to quitting smoking with

CHAMPIX
(varenicline tartrate)



Information for patients who have been prescribed CHAMPIX

You should always read the Patient Information Leaflet contained in your pack before you start taking Champix. If you have any further questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist.



Congratulations on taking the first step to becoming smoke-free!

It's not an easy decision to make and giving up smoking can be challenging, but you will soon feel the benefits of not smoking.

The first few weeks are often the hardest as this is the time when cravings and withdrawal symptoms are at their worst. But these effects do lessen with time and it will get easier the longer you stay smoke-free.

You have been prescribed **CHAMPIX** to help support you in your quit attempt.

What is CHAMPIX?

CHAMPIX is a prescription medicine, called varenicline, which is used to help adults to quit smoking.

Unlike nicotine replacement therapies (e.g. nicotine patches, gum or inhalation devices), **CHAMPIX** does not contain any nicotine. It blocks the action of nicotine in your brain and helps to reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms associated with giving up smoking.

What to expect with CHAMPIX treatment

When do I start taking CHAMPIX?

You should start taking your **CHAMPIX** tablets 1–2 weeks before you quit smoking.

Before you start taking your **CHAMPIX** you should set your quit date. This should be in the second week of treatment (between day 8 and day 14). It's important to write this date on the pack as a reminder.

If you are unable (or unwilling) to give up on your designated quit date, you can choose an alternative quit date within 5 weeks of starting treatment. Again, you should make a note of this date on the pack as a reminder.

Alternatively, you can choose to reduce smoking during the first 12 weeks of treatment and quit by the end of that treatment period. You should then continue to take **CHAMPIX** 1 mg film-coated tablets twice daily for a further 12 weeks, resulting in a total of 24 weeks of treatment. You should discuss your treatment schedules with your healthcare professional.

How long do I need to take CHAMPIX for?

It is recommended that you complete a 12-week course of **CHAMPIX** treatment.

This will help you to get the full benefits from your treatment and improve your chances of quitting smoking.

Starting treatment with CHAMPIX

Your first prescription will be for a 4-week or 2-week starter pack. This is because you take a lower dose of **CHAMPIX** during the first week of treatment. The tablets you need to take each day are clearly labelled on your blister pack.



Your CHAMPIX dose

The usual dose of **CHAMPIX** is 1 mg twice daily following the first week of treatment.

Week(s)	Days	CHAMPIX dose
1	1–3	0.5 mg once daily
1	4–7	0.5 mg twice daily
2–12	8 until end of treatment	1 mg twice daily

When you have completed your starter pack you will continue treatment at 1 mg twice daily, provided in a 4-week or 2-week continuation pack.

However, your doctor may recommend a different dose. For example, if you experience adverse effects that you cannot tolerate, or if you have problems with your kidneys, you should speak to your doctor before taking **CHAMPIX** as you may need a lower dose.

Possible side effects

Like all medicines **CHAMPIX** can cause side effects, although not everyone gets them. The most common side effect is nausea. See the leaflet inside your **CHAMPIX** pack for in-depth details. Giving up smoking with or without treatment can cause various symptoms. These could include changes of mood (like feeling depressed, irritable, frustrated or anxious), sleeplessness, difficulty concentrating, decreased heart rate, increased appetite or weight gain.

Depressed mood, rarely including suicidal thoughts and suicide attempt, may be a symptom of nicotine withdrawal with or without medication. If you are taking **CHAMPIX** and notice this sort of change in your mood, or unusual agitated behaviour, you should stop your treatment and contact your doctor immediately.

New or worse heart or blood vessel (cardiovascular) problems have been reported in people who already have cardiovascular or stroke problems. Tell your doctor if you have any changes in symptoms during treatment with **CHAMPIX**. Get emergency medical help right away if you have symptoms of a heart attack.

Some people have reported seizures while taking **CHAMPIX**. Tell your doctor if you have experienced seizures or have epilepsy before you start **CHAMPIX** treatment.

If you are concerned about side effects, always speak to your doctor straight away.

Reporting of side-effects

If you get any side-effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side-effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side-effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at

www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard

By reporting side-effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

Increase your chance of quitting smoking successfully

It has been shown that the longer you stay on treatment, the greater the chance of successfully quitting. Completing the 12-week treatment course can increase your chance of quitting by more than 10 times, compared to people who complete up to 2 weeks of treatment.

Remember to take your tablets every day

It is important that you take **CHAMPIX** every day as instructed to gain maximum benefit from your treatment.

Taking your tablets at the same time every day e.g. when brushing teeth can help to make your treatment part of your daily routine. If you find it difficult to do this, setting an alarm on your mobile phone can help you to remember.

The **CHAMPIX** packaging is also clearly labelled to help you remember to take it every day.

During treatment with **CHAMPIX**

- Remember to make regular appointments with your smoking cessation advisor – they are there to support you and can answer any questions you may have about your treatment
- Remember to make a prescription appointment before your tablets run out (e.g. with the 4-week pack, by the end of week 3 make sure to have your next prescription appointment booked)



The health benefits of being smoke-free

20 minutes after quitting

Your heart rate returns to normal and your blood pressure drops.

12 hours after quitting

The levels of carbon monoxide return to normal.

48 hours after quitting

Your body is now 100% nicotine free!

72 hours after quitting

You'll find breathing easier and have more energy.

2–12 weeks after quitting

Exercising will now be easier than before. Your blood circulation is now improved throughout your body.

3–9 months after quitting

The efficiency of your lungs is up by 5–10%. The persistent coughing and wheezing will fade away.

1 year after quitting

A quitting milestone! Your risk of heart disease is now half that of a smoker.

5 years after quitting

The chances of stroke are reduced to that of a non-smoker between 5–15 years after quitting.

10 years after quitting

Now your chances of dying from lung cancer are about half that of a smoker. Your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases.

15 years after quitting

Your risk of heart disease is now that of a non-smoker.

Giving up smoking can also save you money

In addition to the health benefits associated with giving up smoking, you will also find the money you save quickly adds up!

Time	Number of cigarettes smoked each day					
	5	10	15	20	30	40
1 week	£20.04	£40.08	£60.11	£80.15	£120.23	£160.30
2 weeks	£40.08	£80.15	£120.23	£160.30	£240.45	£320.60
3 weeks	£60.11	£120.23	£180.34	£240.45	£360.68	£480.90
4 weeks	£80.15	£160.30	£240.45	£320.60	£480.90	£641.20
5 weeks	£100.19	£200.38	£300.56	£400.75	£601.13	£801.50
6 weeks	£120.23	£240.45	£360.68	£480.90	£721.35	£961.80
7 weeks	£140.26	£280.53	£420.79	£561.05	£841.58	£1,122.10
8 weeks	£160.30	£320.60	£480.90	£641.20	£961.80	£1,282.40
9 weeks	£180.34	£360.68	£541.01	£721.35	£1,082.03	£1,442.70
10 weeks	£200.38	£400.75	£601.13	£801.50	£1,202.25	£1,603.00
11 weeks	£220.41	£440.83	£661.24	£881.65	£1,322.48	£1,763.30
12 weeks	£240.45	£480.90	£721.35	£961.80	£1,442.70	£1,923.60
6 months	£520.98	£1,041.95	£1,562.93	£2,083.90	£3,125.85	£4,167.80
1 year	£1,041.95	£2,083.90	£3,125.85	£4,167.80	£6,251.70	£8,335.60

Based on cost of £11.45 for a pack of 20 cigarettes, January 2021.
Source: Office for National Statistics

Why not treat yourself?

You could spend some of the money you have saved to treat yourself to something special when you reach milestones in your quit attempt.

Treat yourself!



Staying motivated

It can be hard to quit smoking, particularly in the first few weeks when you are still experiencing cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Here are some tips to help keep you motivated:

- Remember the reasons you gave up smoking in the first place, whether this is for personal, health, family or financial reasons – it may help to make a list or carry a photograph as a reminder
- Set short-term personal goals and take one day at a time – each day you remain smoke-free is an achievement and you should feel proud
- You may want to set goals for other personal achievements, such as walking or running, you will probably find you can slowly increase your distance as you start to feel fitter and healthier
- Cravings can last for around five minutes – find your own coping strategies to get you through those 5 minutes. This could be anything which helps to occupy you, such as going for a short walk, having a healthy snack or chewing gum, doing stretching or breathing exercises, listen to a song (you could select your own personal quit theme)
- Some people find their cravings are associated with certain foods or drinks, so changing some of your food and drink choices may help to combat the cravings
- If you normally have a cigarette at certain times of the day or when you are doing certain activities (e.g. morning/bedtime, after a meal, driving your car, talking on the phone), it may help to change your daily routine or try and do things differently to try and avoid these triggers
- If you find it hard not to smoke in social situations, such as going to the pub or a restaurant, it may help to avoid these situations during the first few weeks. Try to find alternative activities to do with friends and family where there is no opportunity to smoke (e.g. cinema, bowling)
- Remind yourself how much money you are saving – maybe put the cash that you would normally spend on cigarettes in a pot or money box, and save up to reward yourself when you achieve certain milestones
- Talking to close friends or family can help you get through difficult times. If you prefer to talk to someone else, there are helplines available (see below for details)

Other Support resources available

- Your Smoking cessation advisor / local Stop Smoking Service
- Quit With Help (Pfizer owned website): www.quitwithhelp.co.uk
- NHS Smoke Free - www.nhs.uk/smokefree