

A brief overview of other methods

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

There is no success rate data on the Nicorette, Nicoderm or Commit websites, but there have been 132 clinical trials into the use of NRT, many of them funded by these very manufacturers.

Some studies show that using NRT (gum, patch etc.) increases the likelihood of success vs. using placebo by around 60%. This sounds encouraging, but what does it actually mean?

If we assume that the placebo success rate is 6-10% (i.e. approximately double the success rate of going it alone) then the success rate for NRT is around 10-16%.

In other words, NRT has a failure rate of around 85-90%.

Many independent commentators even dispute these figures. arguing that the real-life quit rate (outside of the intensive, artificial trial conditions which can include, for example, a number of counseling sessions) for NRT users is 7% at six months. There are many studies that support this belief. Other studies show the success rate for second-time and third-time NRT users is 0%.

So the best case success rate for NRT is 15% and the worst is 0%.

What about the expense? A course of patches will set you back over \$350 and the gum costs even more – nearly \$800.

Anti-depressants (Zyban or Wellbutrin)

You need to do a bit of digging to find them, but success rates are published on Zyban's website. In one study, Zyban's 6-month quit rate was 18% vs. 11% for placebo. In other words, despite the expense (\$450) and the [widely reported side-effects](#), fewer than one in five smokers successfully quit with Zyban (and more than half of them would have quit with the placebo). It should also be noted that the 18% success rate also includes a significant amount of counseling, so the real life quit rate is possibly a good deal lower.

Chantix / Champix

The Chantix website quotes a success rate of 44%, but there are strings attached. First, this is a 12-*week* success rate, not 6 or 12 *months* as is the norm. As such the numbers should be viewed with care.

Second, this success rate, as with Zyban, includes an element of counseling. Third, the 12-week figure might potentially be misleading because at that time, the subject has just

completed the course of strong medication and its effects are still very significant. What happens when the effects wear off?

Unfortunately recently published research provides the answer: fully half of the 44% who had quit at 12 weeks were back smoking within a year.

Other recent studies tally with this, showing the 12-month quit rate using Chantix to be 22%, but as mentioned above this is under artificial trial conditions. How much of Chantix's 22% one-year quitting rate is due to Chantix and how much is attributable to the 26 one-on-one counseling sessions with their Chantix provider? How many real-world quitters will have the benefit of 26 support sessions with their physician?

Chantix is serious medication and isn't for everyone – in addition to your \$500 bill, [Click here](#) to see a list of the side effects along with some consumer feedback.

Hypnosis

According to Cochrane's there have been nine trials looking into using hypnosis to quit smoking. This is their conclusion:

“We have not shown that hypnotherapy has a greater effect on six month quit rates than other interventions or no treatment.”

So despite the extravagant claims made by hypnotherapists of 90% success rates, hypnosis and its offshoots (NLP, EFT etc.) is not an effective way to quit smoking.

Acupuncture / laser therapy

After looking at 23 separate clinical trials Cochrane's concluded:

“The long-term result shows no effect of acupuncture compared with sham acupuncture. There was no consistent evidence that acupuncture is superior to no treatment”.

Whilst acupuncture may be an effective treatment for some health issues, quitting smoking isn't one of them.

Herbal supplements (Smokeaway, Cig-Arette, Smoke Deter, Zero Nicotine etc.)

These products often claim extremely high success rates, but they are unable to point to independent, peer-reviewed research to support their claims.

Very often, the success rate quoted is actually their refund rate: in a piece of highly-suspect reasoning they argue that if a customer did not apply for a refund, then it must be because they quit successfully. But there are dozens of other reasons why a refund may not be claimed - laziness and apathy being two such reasons.

If these products really helped smokers, they wouldn't need to air infomercials on late night cable stations; doctors would be recommending them to smokers wanting to quit. The reason they don't is because herbal supplements just don't work.

The many complaints lodged about such companies with the FTC and FDA show these products for what they are. In a recent (May 2008) case, the FTC said: "The defendants have claimed their product has a 97% success rate, but there is no substantiation for these claims."