

# Varenicline

## Varenicline (Champix®)

Tobacco contains a very powerful, addictive drug called nicotine. Your body becomes used to the effects of nicotine. When you go without it, quit, or cut back, your body and brain need to adjust. This adjustment is called nicotine withdrawal. Withdrawal can start as soon as 30 minutes after you last used tobacco. There is medicine that can help with withdrawal and increase your chances of quitting or reducing your tobacco use.

Your healthcare provider will help you decide if this product is the best one for you, what dose you need, how long you should take it, and if you should combine it with another tobacco cessation medicine.

### How does it work?

Varenicline (Champix®) works 2 ways to increase your chances of quitting:

1. it makes using tobacco less satisfying, and
2. it reduces the cravings and other withdrawal symptoms.

You need a prescription for this medicine. If you have any other medical conditions, or are pregnant or breastfeeding, make sure you tell your doctor and your pharmacist before you start this or any other medicine.

*Nicotine withdrawal can cause:*

- tobacco craving
- irritability
- anxiety
- trouble concentrating
- restlessness
- sleeplessness
- depression
- increased appetite

### How do I use it?



Take as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.

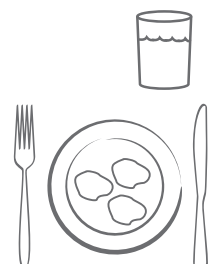
**Calendar**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Start Medication → 1

Quit ← 12


Start 8-14 days before your set quit date OR quit smoking 8-35 days after starting treatment.



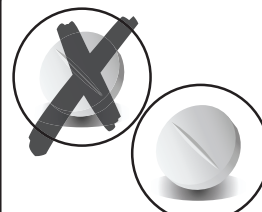
Can take with food and/or water to cut down on stomach upset.

*Your body may clear the caffeine in coffee, tea, pop, and energy drinks differently once you stop smoking.*

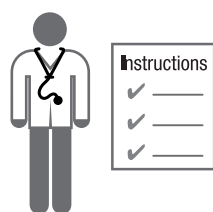
*You may need to cut down or watch how much caffeine you drink once you stop smoking.*



Do not crush or chew tablets.



If you miss a dose, wait and take your next dose at the usual time. **Do not double up the dose.**



Once you have quit using tobacco, keep taking according to your doctor's instructions.

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## What else should I know?

- Store the medicine at room temperature (permissible to 15-30° C), away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
- Keep out of reach of children and pets.
- Do not use varenicline at the same time as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) without a discussion with your doctor and/or pharmacist.
- Don't take this medicine if you are 17 or younger.

## What should I watch for?

- Side effects:
  - Nausea and or vomiting: take with food and/or water.
  - Weight gain.
  - Trouble sleeping or unusual dreams.
  - Drowsiness: do not drive or use heavy machinery until you know how this medicine affects you.
  - Depressed mood, agitation, changes in behaviour, suicidal thoughts. If you experience any of these side effects, stop taking the medication and talk to your doctor right away. This medicine has not been proven to cause these symptoms.
  - Sudden onset of signs of stroke or heart attack such as severe dizziness, weakness, trouble speaking, vision problems, loss of sensation of limbs or face, clumsiness, severe headache, chest pain with left shoulder/jaw pain, constriction and chest tightness, and lots of sweating. Stop taking and see a doctor right away.
- Allergic reaction (for example: very bad itching, hives, swelling in your mouth, tight feeling in your chest, or trouble breathing). Stop taking and see a doctor right away.
- Speak to your pharmacist about how quitting might affect other medicine you take. Your body may respond to some medicine differently once you stop using tobacco.

*Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any concerns about changes to your health, including depressed mood, while taking this medicine.*

## What else can I do?

Your chance of successfully quitting tobacco improves if you combine quit methods like medicine and supportive counselling.

AlbertaQuits is free, convenient, personalized support to quit smoking or spit tobacco.

# AlbertaQuits

FREE | CONVENIENT | PERSONALIZED

[albertaquits.ca](http://albertaquits.ca)

1-866-710-QUIT (7848)

### ONLINE AlbertaQuits Online:



[albertaquits.ca](http://albertaquits.ca)

Access member tools, interactive quit plans, and a supportive community to help you quit.

### TEXT



### AlbertaQuits by Text

Get quit tips and support sent straight to your smart phone. Support is just a TEXT away!

### PHONE AlbertaQuits Helpline:



1-866-710-QUIT

Cessation Counsellors will help you develop a quit plan, manage cravings and stay on track.

### GROUPS AlbertaQuits Groups



QuitCore offers FREE groups, run by trained leaders. Get support, share experiences and learn how to quit.