



Prescription Only Medication: Nicotine Nasal Spray (Nicotrol NS®)



Nicotine Nasal Spray

Type: Short-acting medicine

Brand: Nicotrol® NS, no generics available

Cost: About \$3 per day, \$90 per month

How does nicotine nasal spray work?

- Nicotine nasal spray helps users stop smoking by taking the edge off cigarette cravings without providing the other harmful substances found in cigarettes.
- Nicotine nasal spray dispenses nicotine through a spray device similar to over-the-counter decongestant sprays. Nicotine is delivered through the nostrils, and is rapidly absorbed through the nasal membranes. With nasal spray, nicotine reaches the bloodstream faster than any other nicotine replacement product, however, it is still slower than cigarettes. This product can be very useful to people who smoke heavily because of the fast nicotine delivery.
- The recommended period for use for is up to eight weeks, after which a tapered dose is recommended for four to six weeks. Potential users should consult health care providers when considering nicotine nasal spray.

What are the directions for use?

- Start with one to two doses per hour; a single dose is typically one spray in each nostril. The maximum recommended dosage is five doses per hour.
- Do not use more than 40 doses per day.
- Do not smoke during use.

What are the advantages to using nicotine nasal spray?

- Nicotine nasal spray is user-controlled dose and easy to use.
- This medication gets rid of symptoms faster than any other medication.

What are the disadvantages to using nicotine nasal spray?

- Nicotine nasal sprays can be costly, and there is no generic form currently on the market.
- This medication requires a prescription.

What are some of the side-effects?

- Some users have experienced irritation of the nose and throat, cough, sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose and nausea.

What precautions are associated with the nicotine nasal spray?

- Nicotine nasal spray is not recommended for people who have a nasal or sinus condition, allergies or asthma.
- The FDA classified the nicotine nasal spray as a pregnancy category “D” drug (high risk to the fetus) for use during pregnancy. Pregnant women who smoke should discuss using nicotine nasal spray with their health care providers.

These are a few of the most common side-effects and interactions. If you have questions or have problems when using this medicine, contact your doctor/pharmacist.

Adapted from Asthma and COPD Center of the University of Chicago, and from Pharmacological Product Guide: FDA-Approved Medications, The Regents of the University of California, August 2009.