

# ***Smoking Cessation Medication: BUPROPION (Zyban/Wellbutrin)***

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## ***Definition and Symptoms***

Bupropion is a medication originally developed to treat depression. It has been found to help some people stop using nicotine, by helping their brain produce dopamine, a neurotransmitter chemical that helps one “feel good”, in a similar way that nicotine would make you “feel good”. Unlike nicotine, bupropion is not habit forming or addictive. Bupropion can decrease the craving and help you avoid nicotine. While using bupropion, you will need to use other tools for the most effective results. Do not expect it to do all the work - your commitment to quit is key.

Inform your health care practitioner if you have any of the following:

- Liver impairment or alcohol abuse.
- A history of seizures or convulsions, either in your family or yourself.
- Bulimia or anorexia, current or past.
- A history of a severe head injury or brain surgery.
- A history of bipolar (manic-depressive) illness.
- Parkinson’s disease being treated with medications to increase dopamine (Sinemet, L-Dopa, etc.)

Inform your health care practitioner if you are taking any of the following:

- Recently taking benzodiazepines (medication for anxiety) or other medications for psychiatric or seizure problems.
- Taking stimulants such as Adderall or Ritalin for ADHD or other conditions.
- If you are taking Tagamet (cimetadine), ulcer or anti-acid medications.
- If you are taking albuterol (Proventil or Ventolin) tablets or inhalers for asthma.
- Other medications or products that you are taking.

## ***Side Effects and Cautions***

You may experience the following symptoms when you start taking bupropion. Usually, these go away in the first week or two. Call your health care provider if you experience any of the side effects listed or other problems.

- Agitation and insomnia - Take the second dose in the afternoon to avoid insomnia. Taking the medication with food may help. People who

experience nervousness often find that this occurs when they first start on bupropion and it may gradually go away.

- Weight loss - Bupropion may cause decrease in appetite, leading to weight loss. Make sure to eat a healthy, adequate diet.
- Headache, dry mouth, nausea, sweating, increased or irregular heartbeat.
- The risk of seizures occurring with the use of bupropion is strongly associated with the presence of certain risk factors and with higher dosages.

It is also recommended that you follow the guidelines listed below while taking bupropion:

- Do not drink any beverages that contain alcohol. Binge drinking can cause seizures.
- Do not take any other medications including over the counter medications without asking your health care practitioner.
- Keep bupropion and all medications out of the reach of children and pets at all times.
- The safety of bupropion during pregnancy or while breast-feeding is unproven. You **should not** smoke during pregnancy. In addition, you should not use any medications during pregnancy unless they are prescribed or approved by your health care practitioner.

## ***Hints for Successful Use of Bupropion***

- Take your first dose in the morning with food. Avoid caffeine as much as possible; caffeine can make any agitation or nervousness you might experience worse.
- Make a commitment to yourself to daily increase physical activity. Ten to twenty minutes or more of walking helps to decrease cravings for nicotine and boosts your mood.
- Establishing healthy eating patterns helps avoid weight gain. Getting hungry can make cravings worse.
- Eat plenty of fiber. Some people experience constipation when stopping smoking and find it helpful to increase the fiber in their diet. Eating celery whenever you crave a cigarette can be helpful in many ways.
- Get plenty of rest. Someone overtired is more likely to be cranky and irritable. Your body needs the time to heal as well.

