Flowchart for NRT and combination NRT

The approach below is adapted from one suggested in Bittoun R. A Combination Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) Algorithm for Hard-to-Treat Smokers, Journal of Smoking Cessation, 2006; 1(1): 3–6

Offer psychosocial and behavioural interventions; identify and plan to manage smoking cues

Commence 1 x 21mg patch / 24 hours. Change nightly before sleep.

Contraindications for patch: pregnancy (or likely to be pregnant), cardiovascular event in last 48 hours (1)

Smoking cessation
AND no urge to smoke
AND no other withdrawal symptoms

Still smoking but
<10 cigarettes /day
OR stopped but has urge to smoke
AND/OR withdrawal symptoms

Still smoking
>10 cigarettes /day

ADD 4mg gum
OR lozenge OR inhaler
OR sublingual tablet
(Now using: 1x 24 hour patch + oral NRT)

ADD a second patch during the day only
(Now using: 1x 24 hour patch + 1 daytime-only patch)

Smoking cessation
AND no urge to smoke
AND no other withdrawal symptoms

ADD a second patch during the day only
(Now using: 1x 24 hour patch + 1 daytime-only patch + oral NRT)

Continue for 2 weeks.
After 2 weeks: reduce oral NRT (if using), stop second patch (if using).

Continue 1 x 21mg patch for minimum 7-8 weeks.
Spontaneously stop or wear patch only on alternate days for a further week then stop.

Notes:

- Applying the first patch last thing before sleep allows a slow rise of nicotine overnight and reduces the urge for the first cigarette of the day.
- There is no evidence for reduction (weaning) of patch strengths.
- Inhaler or sublingual tablet is recommended over gum or lozenge if consumer needs faster reinforcement.
- Check that oral NRT is used correctly. If gum is chewed or lozenge is crunched, it will mix with saliva and flow into the stomach and cause nausea. Consider reducing concentrations if nausea occurs.
- NRT can be considered in pregnancy and breastfeeding if otherwise unable to quit smoking. Nicotine metabolism is accelerated in pregnancy. (2)
- In pregnancy and breastfeeding oral NRT is preferred to patches. Encourage to remain smoke-free after delivery.