



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
**PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY**

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**Contact:** Jenelle Merzon, MPH, CHES, TTS; tel: 805-781-1562; email: [jmerzon@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:jmerzon@co.slo.ca.us)

## **Prescribing Pediatric Patients Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)**

### **Overview:**

Nationally and locally, youth are becoming addicted to increasingly high levels of nicotine found in the various brands of electronic smoking devices (vapes). However, while NRT is considered part of evidence-based treatment for tobacco use disorder among adults 18 years+, limited age-specific research leaves youth without clear access to this treatment tool.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) can be an important tool for treating nicotine dependence in youth.

### **Recommendations:**

Given the effectiveness of NRT for adults and the severe harms of tobacco dependence especially among youth, **AAP policy recommends that pediatricians consider off-label NRT for youth** who are moderately to severely addicted to nicotine and who wish to quit.

- FDA smoking cessation medications are not (yet) approved for youth under 18 years of age and therefore need to be prescribed by a medical provider.
- Pediatricians should familiarize themselves with how to assess the patient's current nicotine levels (via electronic device) to adequately prescribe equivalent (nicotine) for nicotine replacement therapy (see Dosing Guidelines in AAP's Factsheet cited below).
- Behaviorally based programs are beneficial; however, as a stand-alone treatment, such programs work best for those with *minimal to mild* tobacco dependence.
- Moderately or severely addicted pediatric patients should be prescribed NRT and advised to *also* utilize behaviorally based programs, such as [Kick It CA](#).

### **For more information:**

The American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/tobacco-control-and-prevention/youth-tobacco-cessation/nicotine-replacement-therapy-and-adolescent-patients>

Nicotine Replacement Therapy and Adolescent Patients: Information for Pediatricians

[https://downloads.aap.org/RCE/NRT\\_and\\_Adolescents\\_Pediatrician\\_Guidance\\_factsheet.pdf](https://downloads.aap.org/RCE/NRT_and_Adolescents_Pediatrician_Guidance_factsheet.pdf)

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### **Public Health Department**

2191 Johnson Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 | (P) 805-781-5500 | (F) 805-781-5543

[www.slopublichealth.org](http://www.slopublichealth.org)