

# You may Soon Need Prescription for Nicotine Gums and Patches

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**New Delhi:** In a bid to ensure that nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) including nicotine gums, lozenges and patches are not misused, the government is considering making prescription compulsory for selling all formulations containing up to 2 mg and 4 mg of nicotine.

The Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) — India's top technical advisory body on drugs—deliberated on the matter in a meeting held last month.

As per the existing provisions under Schedule K of Drugs Rules, 1945, nicotine gum and lozenges containing up to 2mg of nicotine are exempted from sale licence and no prescription form a registered medical practitioner is needed for the

retail sale of those products.

In November 2018, the DTAB had decided to amend the rules providing exemption for all nicotine oral formulations containing 2 mg of nicotine. Accordingly, a draft notification was sent to the health ministry for consideration.

The proposed amendment envisaged that all nicotine replacement therapies be made available through OTC sales.

However, the health ministry's Tobacco Control Division (TCD) examined and opined that further relaxation might lead to increased access to NRTs for prospective quitters but at the same time also could pose various risks. It found that some NRTs were available over the counter.

