



Quitting Smoking Doesn't Have to Mean Weight Gain

Quitting smoking is the best step you can take to improve your health.¹ Some smokers are worried about quitting. That's because they think they may gain weight.

Fortunately:

- You don't have to gain weight while you quit smoking¹
- Weight gain often occurs just in the first 6 months of quitting²
- Only about 10% of exsmokers have a large weight gain¹
- Weight gain during quitting is usually small³
- The average weight gain is between 6 and 8 pounds¹

Smoking and your weight

When you become a nonsmoker, changes in your body take place. When you stop smoking, your body no longer gets nicotine. Nicotine has many effects. One is to raise your metabolism.² That means you burn more calories. But it harms your heart, too.¹ When you stop smoking, your metabolism may go down a bit. That may contribute to weight gain.² But by quitting smoking, you'll help to protect your heart.

Being exposed to smoke affects your whole body. After you stop, your sense of taste and your sense of smell improve almost right away.² This makes foods more appealing.² Some people may eat more after they quit smoking. That's because foods smell and taste better. Others may eat snacks to take the place of smoking.² You don't have to do this. There are many other healthy things you can do.

Ways to maintain weight control during the quitting process

- **Plan your meals.** Decide what you are going to eat for each meal in advance. If you eat out, make healthy decisions before you look at the menu. A strong way to be more aware of your eating is to keep a food journal. Keep a small notebook with you. Write down everything you eat. Try to have healthy snacks with you, too. Some good choices are nuts, seeds, dried fruits, grapes, baby carrots, celery, apple slices, and bananas
- **Keep physically active.** That will help you stay at or improve your weight. It can help you reduce stress. It can help ease smoking withdrawal symptoms.¹ Find a favorite activity. Or simply take a walk on most days. As a nonsmoker, you may find physical activity more enjoyable. That's because you may be able to breathe easier while you do it¹



- **Reward yourself with things you enjoy.** When you give up smoking, you have more time and energy for other things. Give yourself nonfood treats. Go to a movie, listen to music, or read a book. Work on a hobby. Buy yourself flowers, jewelry, or sporting event tickets. Don't always make food your reward

And be sure to ask your doctor for help. He or she can give you ways to stop smoking without gaining weight.

Continue on the path toward good health

You are making a great choice to quit smoking. Keep it up. Eat healthy. Enjoy physical activity. See people and do things you enjoy. Get the most out of life!

References:

1. National Institutes of Health. Weight-control Information Network. <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/smoking.htm>. Accessed March 23, 2008.
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3. American Cancer Society. Guide to quitting smoking. http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/content/Special_Concerns.asp. Accessed March 23, 2008.