

Avoiding Weight Gain When Quitting Tobacco

Many people have concerns about gaining weight when they decide to quit using tobacco. Nicotine increases the calories your body uses and can act as an appetite suppressant. Your body may burn calories more slowly and you may feel hungrier when you stop using tobacco. Quitting tobacco use does not mean you will gain weight. Some people gain 4 to 10 pounds during the first few months of quitting, but many people lose this weight as they adjust to life as a non-tobacco user.

Keep your focus on quitting. It can be hard to quit and try to lose weight at the same time. Quit first for your health and deal with any weight gain later, if you need to focus.

Reasons why weight gain may occur

- You may eat to replace the behavior of smoking or using tobacco. You may feel the need to keep your hands or mouth busy.
- Instead of tobacco, food can become a substitute. You may eat during stress, boredom or at social events.
- Your sense of smell and taste may improve after quitting. When food tastes better, you may eat more, even if you are not really hungry.

You can reduce the chance of weight gain

If you eat a healthy diet and stay physically active, you can greatly reduce your chance of gaining weight. Have a plan to deal with stress, boredom or other situations that does not involve food. Try some of these tips to keep your weight under control.

- **Eat healthy:**
 - › Control your portion size. Chew slowly and enjoy each bite.
 - › Snack on healthy foods like carrots, apples or other fresh fruits and vegetables. Fresh vegetables are often low in calories.
 - › Limit foods that are high in sugar or fat such as candy, chips, soda, cakes or cookies.
 - › Drink 6 to 8 cups of water each day. Limit or avoid alcohol that can have lots of calories.
 - › Try sugar free gum, hard candy or a few sunflower seeds to cut the urge to snack.
- **Be active:**
 - › Take walks.
 - › Use the stairs instead of elevators.
 - › Park your car in the lot furthest away from the entrance.
 - › Work in your garden or do yard work.
 - › Ride a bike or do other activities you enjoy.

- **Other things to try:**
 - › Use toothpicks, straws or rubber bands to fulfill your hand to mouth habit.
 - › Keep your hands busy by working on puzzles or read, knit or do crafts.
 - › Call a friend for support.
 - › Track your eating habits by keeping a food diary to help you maintain a healthier diet.
 - › Brush your teeth after eating meals so you are less likely to continue to eat when your meal is finished.
 - › Talk to your doctor about meeting with a dietitian for help with weight loss, if needed.
- Lastly, keep a list of your reasons for quitting close by to help you stay on your path to a tobacco free life.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have questions about quitting tobacco use, or call 1-800-Quit-Now or 1-800-784-8669.