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# Nutrition Matters

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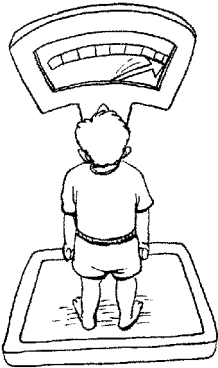
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## Quitting Smoking? Worried About Weight Gain?

### How much weight will I gain if I quit?

Today, many people are giving up smoking. Many more would like to quit but are afraid of gaining weight. Some people do gain weight, but not everyone. Research has

shown that while two-thirds of “quitters” gain weight, one-third stay the same, and some even lose. For those who gain, the average is between 4 to 13 pounds (2 to 6 kg).



### Is it possible to gain weight when you quit, even if you don't eat more?

Yes, it is possible. The research suggests that smoking can increase your metabolism. Therefore, once you quit, your metabolism may slow down - meaning you won't need as much food to gain weight as when you were smoking. So, some ex-smokers gain, even when their diet stays the same. A regular aerobic exercise program is recommended to keep your metabolism up. This includes activities such as swimming, jogging, brisk walking or cross-country skiing. If you are already doing this, then continue. In the long run, it will help you maintain a healthy weight.

### Should I go on a diet before I quit smoking?

No, don't diet! When you skip meals or don't eat enough food your body doesn't burn calories as fast and you will start to store fat more easily. So dieting might increase your chances of weight gain. Instead, try eating healthy and being more active. This may help minimize your weight gain once you quit smoking. Remember it's never too early to start!

### What guidelines should I follow to reduce the chances of gaining weight?

There are lots of ways to keep the extra pounds away. Here are some suggestions:

#### **Change old habits**

Smokers often connect certain situations with cigarettes. When you quit, you may be tempted to eat in that situation. For example, if you always had a cigarette with your coffee or after a meal, you may have a strong craving for one at these times. Don't reach for the cookie jar! Change old habits. Get up from the table as soon as you are done and go for a walk. If you usually have your coffee with a cigarette you may want to give up coffee for a while and try an herbal tea instead. A different beverage may help decrease the craving for a cigarette.

## Guidelines - cont'd ...

### Healthy Snacking

Nicotine is thought to depress the appetite for sweets so you may find yourself craving desserts now. Have plenty of fruit and vegetables around to satisfy your urge to nibble. Apples are great. They are easy to carry, take a while to eat, and make your mouth taste fresh. Other great ideas include: melba toast, crackers, carrots, celery sticks, pretzels, plain or lightly buttered popcorn, low fat milk or yogurt and vegetables or fruit juice.



### Exercise regularly

Be active! Walk, jog, cross-country ski, rollerblade, swim, dance, ride your bike - choose the activities you enjoy and stick with them. Regular exercise will help you:



- burn calories and control your weight
- relieve stress
- control urges for cigarettes
- sleep better
- have more energy
- improve your fitness and sense of well-being
- build self-esteem



### Drink lots of fluids

Some quit-smoking programs recommend increasing your fluid intake. Make sure these extra drinks are caffeine-free. Coffee, tea, chocolate and colas all have caffeine in them and they may increase the “jitters” - a common side effect of nicotine withdrawal. Since you also want to keep your sweet tooth under control, try mineral or soda water, tomato juice, diet drinks or even plain water!



### Reward yourself for not smoking

Don't use food as the grand prize! Put your “cigarette money” aside and spend it on a special treat or save it for a holiday. Spoil yourself. Celebrate each non-smoking anniversary; the first day, week, month and year.

### Make not smoking your first priority!

Follow these tips to reduce your chances of gaining weight, but accept the fact that some weight gain may be normal, as your body adjusts to a major physical change. If you do gain a little weight, don't give up. Quitting smoking takes effort and determination. For now, concentrate on giving up smoking. Once you have kicked the smoking habit you'll have a new boost of confidence to face life's challenges.



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Produced and distributed by the Nutrition Promotion, Peterborough County-City Health Unit,  
10 Hospital Dr., Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1 (705) 743-1000.