

The Truth About Smoking and Weight

Here's the bad news:

There are several reasons why people gain weight when they quit smoking.

- Food starts to smell and taste better, so you eat more.
- Your metabolism slows down slightly after you quit, so you burn fewer calories.
- You reward yourself or fight off cravings with high calorie treats.
- All that water you are drinking to flush your system can lead to a temporary 2 -3 lb. weight gain.

Here's the good news:

You do not have to grow to the size of a small building once you quit smoking. The fact is that about half of those who quit only gain about 5 - 7 pounds. A small percentage of quitters gain more than that. The rest remain the same or even lose weight when they quit.

Best bets:

- Don't try to diet and quit smoking at the same time. Stopping smoking should be your #1 priority.
- If you find yourself snacking to reward yourself or to fight off an urge, make it a low calorie snack like fruit, celery or carrot sticks, air popped popcorn, sugarless mints or gum.

Tips to help you manage your weight while you stop smoking:

- Drink a glass of water before each meal
- Try your best to eat healthy, well-balanced meals
- Eat more lean fish and meats
- Stay away from fast foods
- Eat more leafy green vegetables
- Avoid sugar - it turns to fat quickly
- Avoid fried foods. They are high in fat and add fat to your body
- Substitute low fat foods whenever you can
Some of the low fat versions of salad dressing, milk, cheese, cookies and crackers are delicious. In most cases, you can't even tell the difference
- If you find yourself overeating high calorie foods, take control by writing down everything you eat
- Keep a daily food diary