

Nutrition Tips for Ex-Smokers

Congratulations - you've decided to quit smoking! You will probably be craving nicotine and feeling hungry and restless. To overcome the challenges, try these nutrition tips from Registered Dietitians. Good luck!



Eat well with several small meals throughout the day.

Food will smell and taste better when you have stopped smoking. You may want to eat more as a way of coping with your nicotine cravings.

Everyday, eat several smaller meals plus snacks, including a variety of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, lower fat milk products, leaner meats and meat alternatives. Instead of greasy, salty snack foods, choose lower calorie foods such as unbuttered popcorn and pretzels. If you skip meals, you may be more likely to crave nicotine and overeat later in the day.

Drink lots of fluids, but go easy on the caffeine and alcohol.

Drink six or eight glasses of water a day. Cold water helps to flush the nicotine out of your system and will keep your mouth busy when you're craving a cigarette. Cut back on caffeinated choices like coffee, tea and colas. Caffeine may make you more nervous and anxious. Switch to decaffeinated versions or mix in decaf with your regular coffee. Alcohol may trigger a cigarette craving, especially if you used to drink and smoke at the same time. Avoid alcohol until you've successfully quit smoking.

Ex-Smokers' Nutrition Survival Kit

Do you miss the feeling of having something in your mouth? Keep your mouth busy! Put some of these items in your purse, at your desk, in the car and anywhere else you usually smoked.

- Carrot sticks
- Celery sticks
- Fresh fruit
- Water
- Popcorn (unbuttered)
- Pretzels
- Chewing gum
- Hard candy
- Tic tacs
- Mint toothpicks
- Plastic straws

You would have to gain **80-100** pounds to offset the health benefits of quitting smoking!

Try not to worry about your weight.

Some ex-smokers may gain an average of five to six pounds. If you find your weight creeping up, remember that quitting is much better for your health than smoking. Nicotine artificially raises your metabolism, so when you quit smoking, your metabolism returns to normal and your body burns calories more slowly. Being physically active will help your metabolism high, relieve stress and help control your body weight. Call a buddy and go for a walk, run or a bike ride!



Turn over to learn more "Strategies for avoiding overeating."

For trusted information on healthy eating:

- ❖ Visit the Dietitians of Canada website at www.dietitians.ca
- ❖ Purchase a copy of the Dietitians of Canada's cookbook Great Food Fast
- ❖ Contact a consulting Registered Dietitian at 1-888-901-7776

For information on quitting smoking, visit Health Canada at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/tobacco/quitting/index.html>

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Strategies for avoiding overeating.

According to diet researchers, people tend to fall into one of three eating categories.

- **Snackers** eat regularly and almost never feel full. They tend to have trouble remembering what they've consumed and are prompted to eat by visual clues. Television ads can be a bad influence. Because they eat so often, they may not realize they're overeating.

- If your eating pattern is more like a '**Snacker**', you could benefit from becoming more aware of when and what you are eating. Always taking the effort to sit down and make the meal a more formal event can help, as can trying to space out your meals during the day.

- **Skippers** may not be hungry at mealtimes, often forgetting breakfast and eating lightly at lunch. They end up famished in the evening and start eating as soon as they get home. Because most of their intake comes between 5 p.m. and bedtime, when they are not expending much energy, they can gain weight even though they're not eating particularly large amounts.

- If your pattern of eating is more like a '**Skipper**', one remedy is to begin the day with a small breakfast to start up the metabolism and have a small afternoon snack, something as simple as a cup of low-fat yogurt. As a result, you won't crave so much in the evening.

- **Fillers** eat three meals a day, hungry or not. They clean their plates and may seek out seconds until they feel stuffed. Then they say: "But I don't snack, so why am I gaining weight?"

- If your eating pattern is more like a '**Filler**', the experts suggest that you should resort to filling foods, such as raw vegetables, and practice eating more slowly, which gives the stomach the time it needs to signal that it's satisfied.

