

# Nutrition 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.

Every day, 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 to 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.

Ask your doctor if nicotine gum can be used to help delay weight gain.

## Try not to worry about your weight.

Some ex-smokers may gain an average of five or 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 keep your metabolism high, relieve stress and help control your body weight. Call a buddy and go for a walk, run or a bike ride!

## 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

For trusted information on healthy eating:

- ◆ visit the Dietitians of Canada website at [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)
- ◆ purchase a copy of the Dietitians of Canada's cookbook *Cook Great Food*
- ◆ contact a consulting Registered Dietitian at 1-888-901-7776