



Fact Sheet

Student Health Services, Texas A&M University

Quit Smoking... Without the Weight Gain

Quitting smoking has many health benefits including decreased risk of heart disease and lung cancer. However, many people hesitate to quit because they think it will cause weight gain. It **is** possible to quit smoking and **not** gain weight.

Strategies to Prevent Weight Gain:

- Drink eight 8-oz. glasses of water daily--many people mistake thirst for hunger.
- Try chewing sugar-free gum or eating sugar-free hard candy; this may be helpful in distracting you from chewing on food high in calories.
- Don't quit during the holidays--there are too many temptations to overeat with all the parties and festivities involving food.
- Increase your activity--the only way to prevent weight gain is to take in fewer calories than you burn!

Causes of Weight Gain

The small weight gain some people experience after quitting smoking can be attributed to:

- No longer taking in nicotine, which can act as an appetite suppressant.
- Increased sensitivity of the senses of smell & taste can cause food to be enjoyed more.
- Psychological reasons—smokers may think they need something in their mouth. Food may replace cigarettes as a way to keep the mouth busy.

Strategies for Quitting Smoking:

- Quit during a low-stress time--not during finals!
- Get support--family and friends who are supportive in your goal to quit smoking can help you stay motivated!
- Ask a health care provider at the [Student Health Center](#) about medications that aid in smoking cessation--nicotine patches, etc.
- Avoid situations that make you crave a cigarette--high stress situations, etc.
- If you have friends who smoke, ask them not to light up when you are around!
- Keep your hands busy--take up drawing, cross-stitching, or some other activity that keeps your hands from reaching for the cigarette pack.

In Summary

Quitting smoking has many benefits. You may possibly gain weight when you quit, but if any weight is gained it is usually only a negligible amount. The health implications of this small weight gain are minor when compared to the health implications of continuing to smoke.