

# Nutrition Tips to Quit Smoking and Maintain a Healthy Weight

Congratulations – you’ve decided to quit smoking! Maybe you’re still thinking about it. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. It takes a lot of hard work and determination but it will reduce your risk of developing heart disease, lung disease and cancer.

## Nicotine is a Stimulant

Nicotine is a stimulant and can speed up a person’s digestion. When you cut tobacco out of your life, your metabolism returns to normal and your body burns calories more slowly. Quitting smoking may cause weight gain but you will be much healthier in the long run by quitting. In fact, you would have to gain 80 to 100 pounds to offset the health benefits of giving up tobacco products.

## Create New Eating Cues

Tobacco not only robs you of good health, it dulls your taste buds and sense of smell. The good news is that food will smell and taste better once you stop smoking. However, it also means you may be tempted to eat more as smoking a cigarette often signals the end of a meal. You’ll need to create a new cue that you are finished eating. You could get up from the table when you are finished eating and brush your teeth or do the dishes or anything else that keeps you busy.

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To help you overcome the challenges that come with quitting, try these **5 tips** to help minimize weight gain and build your immune system.

### 1. Eat a variety of healthy food.

- *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* suggests you eat the recommended amount and type of food from the four food groups each day to provide all the vitamins and minerals and other nutrients needed for good health. Plan meals and snacks ahead of time; eat smaller servings at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and enjoy a variety of healthy, lower-fat snacks throughout the day. Don’t skip meals. (See the chart on reverse for healthier food choices from *Canada’s Food Guide*.)

### 2. Increase your intake of vegetables & fruit.

- Enjoy vegetables and fruit at each meal or snack to get the amount you need each day. Have a colourful plate at mealtime by choosing at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day. Vegetables and fruits are loaded with vitamins, fibre and antioxidants, all known to help fight disease and allow your body to perform at its best.

### 3. Increase your fibre intake.

- Foods high in fibre help curb your appetite and create a feeling of fullness. Increase your fibre intake by choosing vegetables and fruit, a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, breads and whole wheat pasta, and meat alternatives including beans and lentils. *Canada's Food Guide* recommends choosing vegetables and fruit more often than juice to increase fibre intake.

### 4. Drink lots of fluids.

- Drink six to eight glasses of water a day. Water helps to flush your system, and will keep your mouth busy when you get the urge to smoke. Low-fat milk (skim, 1% or 2%), clear soups or small amounts of 100% fruit juice\* are healthy ways to add more fluid to your diet. Cut back on caffeinated drinks like regular coffee, tea and colas because they may make you more nervous and anxious. Try switching to decaffeinated versions, or mix your regular brew 50/50 with decaf. Alcohol may reduce your willpower to stay tobacco-free, so avoid it until you feel confident you have broken the association.

### 5. Be active today and every day.

- Being active every day is a step towards better health and a healthy body weight for the new tobacco-free you. *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults* recommends 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more to increase your energy and feel good about yourself. Walking, biking, gardening, or taking the stairs are examples of ways to make physical activity part of your day.

### Tips to Make Healthier food choices...When you are feeling hungry or feel the urge to smoke...

Instead of...	Choose Healthier options...
Potato chips or salty snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrots, cherry tomatoes, red and green pepper, celery, zucchini sticks, cucumber slices, broccoli florets and lower-fat dressing</li> <li>• Homemade cereal trail mix with nuts/seeds and dried fruit</li> <li>• Baked chips or whole grain tortillas with spicy salsa</li> <li>• Pretzels, hot air popcorn or microwave light popcorn (low in fat and trans fat free), peanuts in the shell</li> </ul>
Soft drinks or diet pop, fruit punch/fruit drinks, energy and sports drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water or club soda with lemon</li> <li>• Spritzer made with diluted 100% fruit juice*</li> <li>• Fruit smoothie with lower-fat yogurt</li> </ul>
Chocolate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot chocolate made with lower-fat chocolate milk</li> <li>• Chocolate gelato</li> </ul>
Ice cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherbet</li> <li>• 100% fruit juice popsicles</li> </ul>
Sweets or candy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit and cheese kabobs</li> <li>• Fruit tray with yogurt dip</li> </ul>
Crackers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower-fat whole grain crackers and bread sticks</li> </ul>
Cookies, cake or desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit, yogurt and granola parfait</li> <li>• Fruit tray with yogurt dip</li> <li>• Ginger snaps</li> <li>• Lower-fat mini muffins</li> </ul>

\* Although 100% fruit juices are a source of nutrients according to *Canada's Food Guide*, they can be a significant source of calories if consumed in large quantities (½ cup of 100% fruit juice is one serving of Vegetables and Fruit.)

Check out [www.healthyeating.ca](http://www.healthyeating.ca) for more information on Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. The Dietitians of Canada website at [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca) is a good source of nutrition information. For more information on quitting smoking, visit Smokers' Helpline at [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca).