

Healthy Eating When Quitting Tobacco



Nutrition tips

Why quit smoking or chewing tobacco?

- Lower the risk of cancer in your mouth, lungs and bladder.
- Breathe better and have more energy.
- If you're pregnant, help your baby be born naturally, at the right time (not early) and at the right weight (not too small). For baby, it lowers the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), asthma and ear infections.

Did you know?

- Quitting can save a lot of money.
- In Nunavut, 5 packs of cigarettes buys at least this much food.



Source: Nunavut Food Price Survey, 2014

✓ Eat regularly and don't skip meals to control cravings

- Eating country foods and balanced meals can help you feel satisfied.
- A balanced meal has at least 3 to 4 food groups. Adults should have three meals a day.
- Eat within 1 to 2 hours of waking up. Leave about 4 hours between meals.
- Have a healthy snack between meals if you get hungry.

✓ Keep your mouth and hands busy

- Chew on mint toothpicks, plastic straws, sugar-free gum.
- Suck on ice cubes, frozen fruit or mints.

✓ Keep healthy snacks nearby

- Food tastes and smells better once you quit tobacco. Take your time to eat slowly and enjoy each bite.
- Serve snack foods in a dish to help you eat less.

Snack ideas:

- o Apples, grapes, berries, carrot sticks
- o Hard-boiled eggs
- o Dry, non-sugary cereal
- o Dried meat or fish
- o Pretzels
- o Rice crackers or rice cakes
- o Slightly frozen country meats
- o Unsalted nuts
- o Whole grain crackers topped with canned tuna or salmon
- o Yogurt or fruit sauce (i.e. apple sauce)

✓ Pick healthy drinks

- Make water your main drink.
- It helps flush the nicotine out of your body.
- Keep a water jug in the fridge and try to drink at least 7-10 cups every day.
- Drinking coffee and smoking often go together. Change coffee or tea to another hot drink to break the routine.



Try these ideas:

- o Warm water with lemon or orange juice
- o Hot apple cider: Half boiling water to half apple juice with a little cinnamon
- o Warm milk with some hot chocolate mix
- o Warm soup or broth
- o Weak decaffeinated, or herbal tea

Lifestyle tips

After you stop tobacco, the amount of nicotine in your body will lower. The feelings of withdrawal can last a few weeks. Many of these feelings are also common during pregnancy.

| Feeling of withdrawal | Reason when quitting tobacco use | Lifestyle tips |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>No energy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicotine keeps your body and brain awake. • Your body is learning how to stay awake without nicotine. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to bed early. Try to sleep 6-8 hours. Take a nap if needed. • Exercise every day. • Eat iron-rich foods like country food meats, red store-bought meat, cereal, clams, mussels and beans. • If you are pregnant, ask your nurse or doctor about vitamin supplements. |
| <p>Trouble sleeping</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicotine changed your sleep patterns - your brain is learning new sleep patterns. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop or cut down on caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks, iced tea). Adults should drink less than 3 cups a day. Pregnant women should drink less than 2 cups a day. • Before bed, listen to calm music, pray or read instead of watching T.V. or using the computer. |
| <p>Constipation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your gut moves less. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the <i>Increasing Your Fibre</i> handout to prevent constipation. • If you are constipated, see the <i>Constipation in Adults</i> handout. |
| <p>Weight gain</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may gain some weight during the first few months. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make eating and living healthy part of your stop-tobacco plan to help with cravings and prevent weight gain. • Stress is a trigger for tobacco-use. Avoid eating junk foods as a way to deal with cravings or stress. • Try to do other things to stop yourself from overeating: have a glass of cold water, cut up vegetables, go for a walk, call up a friend or sew. |
| <p>Mood swings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your body is craving nicotine. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take good care of yourself. Limit alcohol, eat well and exercise regularly. • Stay busy with activities: sew, fish, dance and go out on the land. • Keep a regular routine. This includes a good night's sleep. |

