



Quitting smoking doesn't have to be a weighty matter

As the deadline for the smoking ban draws near, don't let the worry of putting on a few pounds stop you giving up cigarettes.

The health risk of a little weight gain is nothing compared to just how damaging smoking is for your health. The average person puts on around 6 to 8 pounds when they quit smoking. Some people may put on more – even up to 30 pounds. But you would have to gain almost 100 pounds to put the same pressure on your heart that smoking causes. Another important fact is that most people return to their normal (pre-smoking) weight after just one year.

One reason for a little weight gain after stopping smoking is that nicotine boosts metabolic rate. But that's not the main reason. For seven out of ten people who put on weight after quitting, the reason is simply that they eat more calories. Feelings of hunger are common; but these will go away after a few weeks. Eating lots of snacks full of sugar and fat will account for lots of extra calories.

If you feel a 'snack attack' approaching try to choose from the following low fat/low calorie options

- Fresh/dried fruit
- Plain popcorn
- Diet yoghurt
- Chopped carrots/peppers/celery with salsa dip
- Diluted fruit juice
- Bowl high fibre cereal
- Whole meal scone
- Plain biscuits/crackers

Eating as little as 100 calories extra every day means you gain one pound of fat weight in a month. That's almost a stone in a year. Here are a few ideas on how to cut out 100 calories;

- Chose tuna tinned in brine or fresh water instead of oil packed
- Instead of mayonnaise on a sandwich add tomato slices, lettuces leaves and pepper strips
- Switch from full fat to low fat or lite milk
- If you like ice-cream limit it to 1 scoop instead of 2
- Switch all your salad dressings to low fat
- Make your own smoothies with loads of fruit and low fat milk instead of milkshakes
- Switch to sugar free gum instead of regular
- If you eat a lot of potatoes – eat one less scoop at dinner
- If you're out to dinner nibble on a bread-stick instead of garlic bread
- As a snack eat plain yoghurt instead of custard style
- Reduce your portions of meat – at dinner cut back from 4 1/2 ounces to 3 (cooked weight)
- Eat two pieces of fruit instead of a bar of chocolate



Another way to cut down on 100 calories is to take more exercise. Here are a few ways to burn it off (based on a 11.5 stone adult)

- Cycling at 10mph for 15 minutes
- Golfing for 10 minutes
- Ironing for 40 minutes
- Washing the floor for 15 minutes
- Slow walking for 20 minutes
- Moderate pace walking for 15 minutes

Here are the 5 things you can do to stop weight gain while you focus on giving up cigarettes;

1. Have very regular meals and snacks if you need them.
2. Start some regular exercise – make it fun and something you enjoy.
3. Keep a food diary for a few days before and after you give up. This helps to identify when you are over eating.
4. Always have loads of healthy foods such as fruit around if you feel the urge to snack.
5. Use low calories desserts such as yoghurts, fruit, plain biscuits to fight that 'unfinished feeling' you may get after a meal.

For advice about nutrition speak to a real Dietitian. Contact the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute (INDI) at 01 2804839 or email info@indi.ie Our website is www.indi.ie