



## **HOW TO: CONTROL YOUR WEIGHT WHEN YOU STOP SMOKING**

Many people who have recently stopped, or are thinking about stopping smoking worry about controlling their weight. Although this concern is common, not everyone gains weight. Besides, the dangers of smoking are far greater than those of weight gain.

It is better to first focus on stopping smoking, and then deal with weight gain. When you have recovered from your nicotine addiction and are more confident living as a non-smoker, you can work at losing any extra pounds.



### **Will I gain weight when I stop smoking?**

- ▶ Studies show that 75% of people DO NOT gain weight after they stop smoking.
- ▶ Those people who do gain some weight add an average of 5 to 7 pounds.
- ▶ Most weight gain happens within the first few weeks after stopping smoking.
- ▶ People report that they feel more energetic after they quit smoking and therefore exercise more.
- ▶ Some people actually lose weight after they stop smoking.

### **Why do people gain weight after stopping smoking?**

- ▶ Nicotine, the addictive substance in cigarettes, stimulates (speeds up) your body rate. When you stop smoking, this stimulant is gone.
- ▶ Sometimes the craving for a cigarette is confused with a hunger pang.

### **Isn't being overweight as dangerous as smoking?**

- ▶ NO! Smoking is far more dangerous than the few extra pounds you might gain when you stop.
- ▶ To be at the same risk as smoking, you would need to be 100 pounds over your ideal weight.

### **How can I control my weight after I stop smoking?**

- ▶ Do not substitute food for cigarettes.
- ▶ If the urge to smoke makes you reach for food, STOP and use the 5 D's (see below).
- ▶ Change your habits after eating a meal. Instead of smoking, go for a walk, call a friend, read a book.
- ▶ Exercise more often. (i.e., use stairs, park further away when at work or shopping, take a walk).
- ▶ Recovering from nicotine addiction often includes craving for sugar, so try to avoid sugary foods.

### **When you feel the urge to smoke, practice the 5 D'S**

**Delay**

**Drink Water**

**Do Something Else**

**Deep Breathe**

**Discuss**