

## Quit Smoking – Gain Weight?

Many people keep smoking because they are afraid of gaining weight. On average, weight gain after quitting smoking is only between 5–10 pounds. The many health benefits of quitting smoking, along with the years added to your life, will offset the few pounds you may gain.

There are things you can do to avoid gaining weight when you quit:

### Start Eating Differently

- Eat more vegetables and fruit. Fill up on these!
- Avoid high-fat, high-sugar foods and beverages.
- Eat small amounts 5–6 times/day, instead of 2–3 large meals.
- Eat very s-l-o-w-l-y. Completely enjoy every morsel!
- Eat at the table, not in front of the TV.
- Plan ahead. Bring your lunch rather than eating fast food.
- Keep crunchy snacks, such as carrot sticks, apples, and pretzels handy.
- Drink more water.

### Become More Physically Active

- Take walks, go bicycling, swim, play active sports...whatever you enjoy. Exercise and breathing become easier when you quit.
- Set a time each day to do some physical activity.
- It may be better to break physical activity into shorter times, 2–3 sessions per day.
- Stay hydrated.



- Manage urges to smoke or to eat by taking a 5-minute physical activity break (for example, walk around the block).

### **Other tips**

- Keep your mouth busy with calorie-free mints, gum, toothpicks, a straw, a cinnamon stick, and so on.
- Brush your teeth frequently.

**Quitting smoking and managing your weight will improve your health. Your VA team is ready to help! Please talk with your VA provider today about what is available.**

