

# Quitting Smoking & Weight Loss

Smokers are often afraid to quit because they think they'll gain weight. And there's good reason for this. But provided the appropriate actions are taken, this doesn't have to be so.

## **Why some smokers gain weight after quitting?**

Smoking has an effect on metabolic rate. The increase caused by nicotine is likely to result in a significant increase in total energy expenditure, which will indirectly keep your weight down. As well as this, smoking offers something to do with your hands, and in some people this can be a substitute for putting food in their mouth. There's also a decrease in taste as a result of smoking which leads to less food being eaten for taste.

The combination of these reasons is enough to guarantee that quitting smoking, in many cases will result in weight gain. This is not always the case, and in fact, research with twins carried out some time ago suggests that approximately 1/3 of smokers will put on weight when they quit, 1/3 will stay the same and 1/3 will actually lose.

## **How to quit and lose.**

Swedish scientists recently looked at ways to reduce the impact of quitting on weight loss. They tested two groups of overweight smoking women on a quit program. One group was also given a weight loss program to carry out at the same time and this group was more successful overall in both quitting smoking and preventing weight gain. While the non-weight control group gained about 1kg in 3 months, the weight control group actually lost 2-3kg!

Other work suggests that it may be better to go on a weight loss program before you try to quit. This is because you're more likely to feel positive about giving up after you've made some improvements to your health. This approach also avoids having to make two major lifestyle changes at the one time.

## **The right program.**

It's important that if you do try to lose weight, you do it correctly. A quick, fad, diet that claims to make you lose a large amount in a short period won't work! In fact it can be counter-productive. It could mean that you'll wind up fatter over time. Any change that you make (just like quitting smoking) has to be one that you're confident you can do for the rest of your life. Talk to your doctor about the right type of eating and physical activity to get you on the right track before you take the big step to quit. Also, ask him or her about some of the new medications that might help you do that. Then set a date and go for it!

For more information on weight loss or quitting smoking go to [www.lifestylemedicine.net.au](http://www.lifestylemedicine.net.au)  
OR email: [info@lifestylemedicine.net.au](mailto:info@lifestylemedicine.net.au)