

Patients Concerned About Weight Gain

Many studies demonstrate that women are less successful in quitting smoking than men...but depression, fear of weight gain and menstrual cycle influences may contribute to the discrepancy.

It is important that clinicians neither deny the likelihood of weight gain nor minimize its significance to the patient. The patient should be informed about the likelihood of weight gain and be prepared for its occurrence. The clinician can counter any exaggerated fears about weight gain given the relatively moderate weight gain that typically occurs.

Clinicians should stress that quitting smoking is the patient's primary, immediate priority, and that the patient will be most successful in the long run if he or she does not take strong measures (i.e., strict dieting) to counteract weight gain during a quit attempt.

The clinician should offer to help the patient address weight gain once the patient has successfully quit smoking. The clinician should recommend that intensive weight control strategies be avoided until the patient is no longer experiencing withdrawal symptoms and is confident that he or she will not return to smoking. The patient should be encouraged to maintain or adopt a healthy lifestyle, including engaging in moderate exercise, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, and limiting alcohol consumption.

