

## The Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Within 20 minutes of last cigarette:

- Blood pressure may drop to normal level
- Pulse rate drops to normal rate
- Body temperature of hands, feet increases to normal

Within 8 Hours:

- Carbon monoxide level in blood drops
- Oxygen level in blood increases

Within 24 Hours:

- May reduce change of heart attack

Within 48 Hours:

- Nerve endings may regrow
- Ability to smell and taste enhanced

Within 72 Hours:

- Bronchial tubes relax; if undamaged, will make breathing easier
- Lung capacity increases

2 Weeks to 3 Months:

- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung function may increase up to 20%

1 Month to 9 Months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath may decrease markedly over a number of weeks
- Potential for cilia to regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, reduce infection

1 Year:

- The risk of heart disease is reduced by half. After 15 years, the risk is similar to that of persons who have never smoked

2 Years:

- Cervical cancer risk reduced compared to continuing smokers
- Bladder cancer risk halved compared to continuing smokers

5 Years:

- Lung cancer death rate for average smoker (one pack a day) decreases from 137 per 100,000 to 72 per 100,000
- 5 to 15 years after quitting, stroke risk is reduced to that of someone who has never smoked

10 Years and Longer:

- Precancerous cells are replaced
- Risk of other cancers – such as those of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decrease (there are 50 chemicals in tobacco smoke that cause cancer).
- After long-term quitting the risk of death from Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease is reduced compared to someone who continues to smoke

Time periods mentioned are to be taken as a general measure only and will, naturally vary from individual to individual and are dependent upon length of habit and amount of cigarettes smoked.

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Originally adapted from:

1. Summary of the Health Benefits of Smoking Cessation: A report of the Surgeon General, 1990, CDC, US. Public Health Service.
2. American Cancer Society, New York Times
3. Metropolitan Toronto Interagency Council on Smoking and Health.