



## **What Happens to Your Health Once You Quit Smoking?**

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**Quitting tobacco use is one of the best things that you can do for your personal health. Ever wonder what happens when you quit?** The American Cancer Society shares these facts about what happens to the body after a person quits smoking.

- **20 minutes after quitting:** Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- **12 hours after quitting:** The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- **2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:** Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.
- **1 to 9 months after quitting:** Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) start to regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.
- **1 year after quitting:** The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a person who continues to smoke.
- **5 years after quitting:** Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.
- **10 years after quitting:** The risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking. The risk of cancer of the larynx and pancreas decreases.
- **15 years after quitting:** The risk of coronary heart disease is that of someone who does not smoke.

These are just a few of the benefits of quitting smoking for good. Quitting smoking lowers the risk of diabetes, lets blood vessels work better, and helps the heart and lungs. Quitting while you are younger will reduce your health risks more, but quitting at any age can give back years of life that would be lost by continuing to smoke.

In addition to personal health benefits, there are significant benefits for those that care about you. Second-hand smoke is harmful, especially to growing children. Babies and children exposed to smoke are more likely to get colds, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, and have more asthma attacks. The risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is higher both for babies whose mothers smoked while pregnant and for those babies exposed to second-hand smoke after birth.

If you are considering quitting, there are resources in our community to help.

- The Stop Smoking Support Group at Providence St. Peter's Hospital is free and open to the public. It meets Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm in the cafeteria. Call 360-357-5297 for more information.

Many health plans cover tobacco cessation programs, check with your health plan. Talk with your health care provider about what the best option is for you.

- Online you can visit the American Cancer Society's website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), click on the link to quit smoking.

There are many good reasons to quit smoking - what is yours?

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