

When Smokers Quit

Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins a series of changes that continues for years.

20 Minutes

- Blood pressure drops to normal
- Pulse rate drops to normal
- Body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal

8 Hours

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

24 Hours

- Chance of heart attack decreases

48 Hours

- Nerve endings start regrowing
- Ability to smell and taste enhanced

2 Weeks to 3 Months

- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung function increases up to 30 percent

1 to 9 Months

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases
- Cilia regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, reduce infection
- Body's overall energy increases

1 Year

- Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker

5 Years

- Lung cancer death rate for average former smoker (one pack a day) decreases by almost half
- Stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5-15 years after quitting
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is half that of a smoker's

10 Years

- Lung cancer death rate similar to that of nonsmokers
- Pre-cancerous cells are replaced
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases

15 Years

- Risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker

Source: American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

