

Why Should You Stop Smoking?

Time to Benefits After Quitting

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 continuing smoker's.
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 a non-smoker's.

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.

Additional Resources

www.americanheart.org — Click on “Getting Healthy” and then on “Quit Smoking.”

www.cancer.org — Click on the banner portion titled “Stay Healthy” and then click on “Stay Away From Tobacco.”

www.cdc.gov/tobacco — Look at “Resources for You” section and click on “Individuals”

www.cancer.gov — On the bottom right of the page, under the heading “Cancer Topics”, click on “smoking”

The choice is yours....



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Your health

Health concerns usually top the list of reasons people give for quitting smoking. This is a very real concern: smoking harms nearly every organ of the body. Half of all smokers who keep smoking will end up dying from a smoking-related illness. In the United States alone, smoking is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths, and about 8.6 million people suffer from smoking-related lung and heart diseases.

Cancer

Nearly everyone knows that smoking can cause lung cancer, but few people realize it is also linked to higher risk for many other kinds of cancer too, including cancer of the mouth, nose, sinuses, voice box (larynx), throat (pharynx), esophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas, cervix, stomach, and acute myeloid leukemia.

Lung diseases

Smoking greatly increases your risk of getting long-term lung diseases like emphysema and chronic bronchitis. These diseases make it harder to breathe, and are grouped together under the name chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD causes chronic illness and disability, and gets worse over time — sometimes becoming fatal. Emphysema and chronic bronchitis can be found in people as young as 40, but are usually found later in life, when the symptoms get much worse. Long-term smokers have the highest risk of developing severe COPD. Pneumonia is also included in the list of diseases known to be caused by smoking.

Heart attacks, strokes, and blood vessel diseases

Smokers are twice as likely to die from heart attacks as are non-smokers. Smoking is a major risk factor for peripheral vascular disease, a narrowing of the blood vessels that carry blood to the leg and arm muscles. Smoking also affects the walls of the vessels that carry blood to the brain (carotid arteries), which can cause strokes. Smoking can cause abdominal aortic aneurysm, in which the walls of the body's main artery weaken and separate, often causing sudden death. And men who smoke are more likely to develop erectile dysfunction (impotence) because of blood vessel disease.

Blindness and other problems

Smoking causes an increased risk of macular degeneration, one of the most common causes of blindness in

older people. It promotes cataracts, which cloud the lens of the eye. It also causes premature wrinkling of the skin, bad breath, gum disease and tooth loss, bad-smelling clothes and hair, and yellow fingernails.

Special risks to women and babies

Women have some unique risks linked to smoking. Women over 35 who smoke and use birth control pills have a higher risk of heart attack, stroke, and blood clots of the legs. Women who smoke are more likely to miscarry (lose the baby) or have a lower birth-weight baby. And low birth-weight babies are more likely to die, or have learning and physical problems.

Years of life lost due to smoking

Based on data collected in the late 1990s, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that adult male smokers lost an average of 13.2 years of life and female smokers lost 14.5 years of life because of smoking. Each year, smoking causes early deaths for about 443,000 people in the United States. And given the diseases that smoking can cause, it can steal your quality of life long before you die. Smoking-related illness can limit your activities by making it harder to breathe, get around, work, or play.

Why quit now?

No matter how old you are or how long you've smoked, quitting can help you live longer and be healthier. People who stop smoking before age 50 cut their risk of dying in the next 15 years in half compared with those who keep smoking. Ex-smokers enjoy a higher quality of life. They have fewer illnesses like colds and the flu, lower rates of bronchitis and pneumonia, and feel more healthy than people who still smoke. The health benefits of quitting smoking are far greater than any risks from the small weight gain (usually less than 10 pounds) or any emotional or psychological problems that may follow quitting.

Cost

Multiply how much money you spend on tobacco every day by 365 (days per year). The amount may surprise you. Now multiply that by the number of years you have



been using tobacco and that amount will probably shock you. Multiply the cost per year by 10 (for the next 10 years) and ask yourself what you would rather do with that much money. And this doesn't include other possible costs, such as higher costs for health and life insurance, and likely health care costs due to tobacco-related problems.

Example to and health of others

Studies have shown that secondhand smoke causes thousands of deaths each year from lung cancer and heart disease in healthy non-smokers. If you have children, you want to set a good example for them. When asked, nearly all smokers

say they don't want their children to smoke. But children whose parents smoke are more likely to start smoking themselves. You can become a good role model for them by quitting now.

Spirituality

Smoking damages your spiritual life in several ways. God communicates with you through your brain, and if your brain is affected (which it is) by nicotine and other substances, your communication with God is hindered. Also, you cannot truly have peace knowing that you are destroying the body that God created for you (See 1 Corinthians 3:17, 6:19,20). Thankfully, God offers freedom from all temptation (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). Now is a great opportunity to prove God's promises true for yourself (See John 8:34, Romans 6, 1 Corinthians 15:57, John 8:36, 3:16-17, 1 John 1:9, Jeremiah 31:3, Psalm 103:8-13).

The Benefits!

Kicking the tobacco habit offers some benefits that you'll notice right away and some that will develop over time. These rewards can improve most peoples' day-to-day lives a great deal:

- Breath smells better
- Stained teeth get whiter
- Bad smelling clothes and hair go away
- Yellow fingers and fingernails disappear
- Food tastes better
- Sense of smell returns to normal
- Everyday activities no longer leave them out of breath (such as climbing stairs or light housework)

