



Questions About Smoking, Tobacco, and Health

Can quitting really help a lifelong smoker?

Yes. It's never too late to quit using tobacco. The sooner smokers quit, the more they can reduce their chances of getting cancer and other diseases. Within minutes of smoking the last cigarette, the body begins to restore itself.

20 minutes after quitting

Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

(Effect of smoking on arterial stiffness and pulse pressure amplification, Mahmud A, Feely J. 2003. *Hypertension*:41:183)

12 hours after quitting

The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1988, p. 202)

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting

Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1990, pp.193, 194,196, 285, 323)

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.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1990, pp. 285-287, 304)

1 year after quitting

The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker's.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 2010, p. 359)

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.

(*A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease - The*

Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease Fact Sheet, 2010; Tobacco Control: Reversal of Risk After Quitting Smoking. IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Vol. 11. 2007, p 341)

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 (voice box) and pancreas decreases.

(A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease - The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease Fact Sheet, 2010; and US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, pp. vi, 155, 165)

15 years after quitting

The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

(Tobacco Control: Reversal of Risk After Quitting Smoking. IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Vol. 11. 2007. p 11)

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.

Are there benefits of quitting that I'll notice right away?

Kicking the tobacco habit offers some rewards that you'll notice right away and some that will show up more slowly over time. These benefits can improve your day-to-day life a lot.

- Food will taste better.
 - Your sense of smell returns to normal.
 - Your breath, hair, and clothes smell better.
 - Your teeth and fingernails stop yellowing.
 - Ordinary activities leave you less out of breath (for example, climbing a flight of stairs or doing light housework).
 - You can be in smoke-free buildings without having to go outside to smoke.
- Quitting also helps stop the damaging effects of tobacco on how you look, including premature wrinkling of your skin and gum disease.

How do people quit tobacco?

Quitting tobacco is not easy. Most people have to try many times before they are able to quit for good. There are many ways to quit. For example, some are able to stop "cold turkey," some take part in the Great American Smokeout®, and some people quit by using other methods.

No matter what methods they use, they need more than one approach. Tobacco users must deal with the physical symptoms caused by withdrawal from nicotine, which usually only last a few days to a couple of weeks. They also need to deal with the emotional, psychological, and mental dependence. People who quit for good find ways to deal with pressure, stress, and emotional pain

without smoking. The mental/psychological craving can cause relapse even years later—that's how addictive nicotine is!

There's no one best way to quit. Quitting for good may mean using many methods, including step-by-step manuals, self-help groups, counseling, toll-free telephone-based counseling programs, online support, and/or using nicotine replacement therapies or other medicines.

Where can I go for help quitting tobacco?

It's hard to stop using tobacco, but you can do it! About 50 million Americans have quit smoking for good, and now there are more former smokers than current smokers in the US. People are breaking free of other forms of tobacco, too. Many organizations offer information, counseling, and other services on how to quit, as well as information on where to go for help. Other good resources for finding help include your doctor, dentist, local hospital, or employer.

If you want to quit tobacco and need help, contact one of these organizations:

American Cancer Society

Toll-free number: 1-800-227-2345

Web site: www.cancer.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Office on Smoking and Health

Toll-free quit support line: 1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUIT-NOW)

TTY: 1-800-332-8615

Quitting help Web site: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/index.htm

National Cancer Institute

Free tobacco quit line: 1-877-448-7848 (1-877-44U-QUIT) (also available in Spanish)

Smoking cessation: www.smokefree.gov

Nicotine Anonymous (NicA)

Toll-free number: 1-877-879-6422 (1-877-TRY-NICA)

Web site: www.nicotine-anonymous.org

QuitNet

Web site: www.quitnet.com

For more on this topic - go right to the source

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/index>