

PATIENT INFORMATION: Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Quitting is good medicine! For people with heart disease, quitting smoking reduces the risk of repeat heart attacks and death from heart disease by 50 percent or more. For people with peripheral artery disease (poor circulation to the legs), quitting smoking improves ability to exercise and increases overall survival. For people with ulcers, quitting smoking reduces the risk of recurrence and improves short-term healing.

**Smokers' Helpline: Call 1-877-513-5333 Eastern Ontario Health Unit:
Call 1-800-267-7120**

Within 20 minutes

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

8 hours

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

24 hours

- May reduce chance of Heart Attack.

48 Hours

- Nerve endings may grow.
- Ability to smell and taste enhanced.

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 and 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.

**For health advice or general health information from a Registered Nurse,
call Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000**

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 more than 60 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.

Your body's overall energy level increases when you quit smoking. Women who quit before pregnancy or during their first trimester, reduce their chances of having a low birth weight baby to that of someone who has never smoked.

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.

ADAPTED FROM:

- Summary of The Health Benefits of Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General 1990, CDC, US. Public Health Service
- The City of Ottawa pamphlet, January 2002

SOURCES:

- American Cancer Society, New York Times
- Metropolitan Toronto Interagency Council on Smoking and Health.

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