

Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking Over Time

- Within minutes of smoking your last cigarette, your body begins to recover:
- Are there other benefits of quitting that I'll notice right away?

It's never too late to quit using tobacco. The sooner you quit, the more you can reduce your chances of getting cancer and other diseases.

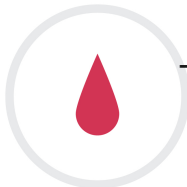
Within minutes of smoking your last cigarette, your body begins to recover:

20
minutes
after
quitting



Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

A few
days
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 12
months
after
quitting**



Coughing and shortness of breath decrease. Tiny hair-like structures (called *cilia*) that move mucus out of the lungs start to regain normal function, increasing their ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

**1 to 2
years
after
quitting**



Your risk of heart attack drops dramatically.

**5 to 10
years
after
quitting**



Your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, and voice box (larynx) is cut in half. Your stroke risk decreases.

**10 years
after
quitting**



Your risk of lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking (after 10 to 15 years). Your risk of cancer of the bladder, esophagus, and kidney decreases.

**15 years
after
quitting**



Your risk of coronary heart disease is close to that of a non-smoker.

These are just a few of the health benefits of quitting smoking for good, but there are others, too.

Quitting smoking lowers your risk of other cancers over time as well, including cancers of the stomach, pancreas, liver, cervix, and colon and rectum, as well as acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

Quitting also lowers your risk of diabetes, helps your blood vessels work better, and helps your heart and lungs.

Quitting smoking can also add as much as 10 years to your life, compared to if you continued to smoke. Quitting while you're younger can reduce your health risks more

(for example, quitting before the age of 40 reduces the risk of dying from smoking-related disease by about 90%), but quitting at any age can give back years of life that would be lost by continuing to smoke.

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

Kicking the tobacco habit offers some other rewards that you'll notice right away and some that will show up over time.

Right away you'll save the money you spent on tobacco. And here are just a few other benefits you may notice:

- Food tastes better.
- Your sense of smell returns to normal.
- Your breath, hair, and clothes smell better.
- Your teeth and fingernails stop yellowing.
- Ordinary activities (for example, climbing stairs or light housework) leave you less out of breath.
- 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, gum disease, and tooth loss.

References

Jha P, Ramasundarahettige C, Landsman V, et al. 21st century hazards of smoking and benefits of cessation in the United States . *N Engl J Med*. 2013;368(4):341-350.

Lu Q, Gottlieb E, Rounds S. Effects of cigarette smoke on pulmonary endothelial cells. *Lung Cellular and Molecular Physiology*. 2018; 314(5): L743-L756.

Mahmud A, Feely J. Effect of smoking on arterial stiffness and pulse pressure amplification. *Hypertension*. 2003;41(1):183-187.

McEvoy JW, et al. Cigarette smoking and cardiovascular events: Role of inflammation and subclinical atherosclerosis from the multiethnic study of atherosclerosis. *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology*. 2015; 35: 700-709.

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Smoking and Tobacco Use:

Benefits of Quitting. 2020. Accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/benefits/index.htm on November 4, 2020.

US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *The Health Benefits of Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General*. 1990.

US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. 2014. Accessed at <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/exec-summary.pdf> on November 4, 2020.

US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General*. 2010. Accessed at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53017/> on November 4, 2020.

US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. 2004. Accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2004/index.htm on November 4, 2020.

US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *Smoking Cessation. A Report of the Surgeon General*. 2020. Accessed at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf> on November 4, 2020.

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

Written by

The American Cancer Society medical and editorial content team
(<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/acs-medical-content-and-news-staff.html>)

Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as journalists, editors, and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

American Cancer Society medical information is copyrighted material. For reprint requests, please see our Content Usage Policy (www.cancer.org/about-us/policies/content-usage.html).

cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345