

Appendix E: The Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Within 20 minutes of last cigarette:

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

Within 8 hours:

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

Within 24 hours:

- May reduce chance of heart attack

Within 48 hours:

- Nerve endings may regrow
- Ability to smell and taste is enhanced

Within 72 hours:

- Bronchial tubes relax; if undamaged, making breathing easier
- Lung capacity increases

2 weeks to 3 months:

- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung function may increase up to 20 percent

1 month to 9 months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath may decrease markedly over a number of weeks
- Potential for cilia to regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucous, 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 is reduced compared to continuing smokers
- Bladder cancer risk is halved compared to continuing smokers

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—decreases
- After long-term quitting, the risk of death from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is reduced compared to someone who continues to smoke

Time periods mentioned are to be taken as a general measure only, will naturally vary from individual to individual, and are dependent on length of habit and number of cigarettes smoked.

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