

WHEN SMOKERS QUIT

Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins a series of changes that continues for years. All benefits are lost by smoking just one cigarette a day, according to the American Cancer Society.

20 MINUTES

Blood pressure drops to normal. Body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal

8 HOURS

Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal.

Oxygen level in blood increases to normal.

24 HOURS

Chance of heart attack decreases

48 HOURS

Nerve endings start regrowing

Ability to smell and taste is enhanced

2 WEEKS TO 3 MONTHS

Circulation improves

Walking becomes easier

Lung function increases up to 30 percent

1 TO 9 MONTHS

Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decrease

Cilia regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, reduce infection

Body's overall energy increases

1 YEAR

Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker

5 YEARS

Lung-cancer death rate (for average former smoker) decreases by almost half

10 YEARS

Lung-cancer death rate similar to that of nonsmokers

Precancerous cells are replaced

Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases

15 YEARS

Risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker