

# HOW YOUR BODY HEALS ITSELF AFTER YOU QUIT SMOKING



**20 MINUTES**

Heart rate and blood pressure levels drop.

**12 HOURS**

Carbon monoxide levels drop back to normal.

**48 HOURS**

Nerve endings begin to regenerate.  
You can smell and taste better.

**2 WEEKS TO 3 MONTHS**

Risk of heart attack begins to lower.  
Blood flow improves.  
Lung function increases.

**1-9 MONTHS**

Coughing and shortness of breath decrease.  
Airway cilia start working to clean the lungs and reduce infection risk.

**1 YEAR**

Risk of coronary heart disease is half of a smoker's risk.

**5 YEARS**

Cancer risk for mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half.  
Cervical cancer and stroke risk are like a non-smoker's.  
Coronary heart disease risk drops to non-smoker level.

**10 YEARS**

Risk of dying from lung cancer is about half of a smoker's.  
Pancreas and voice box cancer risk decreases.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU QUIT

Be prepared: Side effects start as nicotine leaves your body. Nicotine withdrawal isn't fun, but it is temporary. It's a sign that your body is returning to better health. **Most side effects last 3-5 days, but some may last a few weeks.**

- **Cravings:** Each only lasts a few minutes, so focus on something else – have a drink of water, or chew on a straw.
- **Difficulty sleeping/thinking:** This can lead to fatigue, which may result in dizziness, difficulty concentrating, and memory problems, all of which may last 2 weeks.
- **Constipation:** About 1 in 6 people have this, and it lasts 1-2 weeks.
- **Mood changes:** Anxiety, depression, and irritability – get support by calling your doctor or the Quitline.
- **Head and body aches:** Last a few days and can be helped with over-the-counter pain relievers
- **Cough:** Your lungs are getting cleaned out; a cough drop may help ease this.
- **Increased hunger:** After quitting, you will be able to taste and smell better, which can make you more hungry than usual. Choose healthy foods, including more fruits and vegetables, to help prevent weight gain.