

From the American Lung Association

When smokers quit, within twenty minutes of smoking that last cigarette the body begins a series of changes.

At 20 minutes after quitting:

- blood pressure decreases
- pulse rate drops
- body temperature of hands and feet increases

At 8 hours:

- carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- oxygen level in blood increases to normal

At 24 hours:

- chance of a heart attack decreases

At 48 hours:

- nerve endings start regrowing
- ability to smell and taste is enhanced

The first year after quitting:

At 2 weeks to 3 months:

- circulation improves
- walking becomes easier
- lung function increases

1 to 9 months:

- coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases

1 year:

- excess risk of coronary heart disease is decreased to half that of a smokers

Long-term Benefits of Quitting

At 5 years:

- from 5 to 15 years after quitting, stroke risk is reduced to that of people who have never smoked.

At 10 years:

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- risk of lung cancer drops to as little as one-half that of continuing smokers
- risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases
- risk of ulcer decreases

At 15 years:

- risk of coronary heart disease is now similar to that of people who have never smoked
- risk of death returns to nearly the level of people who have never smoked