

# The Good News About Smoking... You Become Healthier When You Quit!

The list of bad things that can happen to you when you smoke is long and familiar. But what you might not know is that many of these bad effects begin to disappear minutes after you stop smoking! And, after a while, your risks for many conditions are no higher than if you had never smoked at all.

## Important facts to know

- People who quit smoking before age 50 have one half the risk of dying in the next 15 years compared with those who keep smoking!
- Quitting smoking lowers the risk of lung cancer and other cancers; heart attack; stroke; and chronic lung diseases, such as COPD, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.
- Women who stop smoking before they get pregnant, or during the first 3 to 4 months of pregnancy, reduce their risk of having a low-birth weight baby to that of women who never smoked.
- Quitting smoking has many positive effects on the body that start immediately and continue, leading to decreased risks for many smoking-related diseases.

Stop now:	
After 20 minutes	your heart rate drops
After 24 hours	carbon monoxide levels in your blood return to normal
After 2-12 weeks	your chance of heart attack decreases
After 1 year	your excess risk of heart disease drops to half that of a smoker
After 5-15 years	your risk of stroke is that of a nonsmoker
After 10 years	your risk of cancer is lower

- Health benefits of quitting smoking far outweigh risks of weight gain or emotional or psychological problems that may follow quitting.

## Some really scary facts

- Tobacco use is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths in the US.
- Smoking cigarettes kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, murder, and illegal drugs combined. Smoking is responsible for:
  - At least one third of all cancer deaths
  - Almost 9 out of 10 lung cancer deaths
- Smoking is a major cause of heart disease, aneurysms, COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, and stroke.
- Men who smoke may be more likely to have erectile dysfunction (ED).
- Smokeless tobacco products, such as chewing tobacco and snuff:
  - Increase the risk of mouth cancers and cancer of the pancreas
  - Are linked to gum disease and tooth decay
  - Cause reduced sperm count and abnormal sperm cells
  - Increase the risk for premature birth and low birth weight

*Think about this the next time you want to reach for a cigarette:  
Stop! it is not too late to help your body  
recover from the damage caused by smoking!*

For more information and “quit-smoking” help, visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)