

Quitting Tobacco: Short-term and Long-term Health Benefits

The positive effects of quitting begin very soon after you stop using tobacco and continue long after you've quit.

Short-term Benefits

- Your blood pressure, pulse, and body temperature, which were abnormally elevated by nicotine, return to normal. *Persons taking blood pressure medication should continue doing so until told otherwise by their physician.*
- Your body starts to heal itself. Carbon monoxide and oxygen levels in your blood return to normal.
- Your chance of having a heart attack goes down.
- Nerve endings start to regrow. Your ability to taste and smell improves.
- Your breathing passages (bronchial tubes) relax, lung capacity goes up, and your breathing becomes easier.
- Your circulation improves and your lungs become stronger, making it easier to walk.
- In your lungs, the cilia (hairlike structures on the lining) begin to regrow, increasing the ability of your lungs to handle mucus, to clean themselves, and to reduce infection. Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease. Your overall energy level increases.

Long-term Benefits

- As a former smoker, your chance of dying from lung cancer is less than it would be if you continued to smoke. Your chance of getting cancer of the throat, bladder, kidney, or pancreas also decreases.

How To Get Help

- If you or someone you know wants help with giving up tobacco, please call the National Cancer Institute's Smoking Quitline toll-free at 1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848). The information specialists on the Quitline can provide suggestions and support to help smokers break the habit.
- The Federal Government's Smokefree.gov Web site (<http://www.smokefree.gov>) allows you to choose the help that best fits your needs. You can get immediate assistance:
 - o View an online step-by-step cessation guide.
 - o Find state quitline telephone numbers.



- o Instant message an expert through NCI's **LiveHelp** service.
- o Download, print, or order publications about quitting smoking.

This fact sheet was adapted from material developed by the Tobacco Education and Prevention Program of the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Arizona Smokers' Helpline of the University of Arizona.

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