

Appendix D: The Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Within 20 minutes of last cigarette:

- Blood pressure may drop to normal level.
- Pulse rate drops to normal rate.
- Body temperature of hands, feet increases to normal.

Within 8 Hours:

- Carbon monoxide level in blood drops.
- Oxygen level in blood increases.

Within 24 Hours:

- May reduce chance of heart attack.

Within 48 Hours:

- Nerve endings may regrow.
- Ability to smell and taste enhanced.

Within 72 Hours:

- Bronchial tubes relax; if undamaged, will make breathing easier.
- Lung capacity increases.

2 Weeks to 3 Months:

- Circulation improves.
- Walking becomes easier.
- Lung function may increase up to 20 percent.

1 Month to 9 Months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath may decrease markedly over a number of weeks.
- Potential for cilia to regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucous, clean the lungs, and reduce infection.

1 Year:

- The risk of heart disease is reduced by half. After 15 years, the risk is similar to that of persons who have never smoked.

2 Years:

- Cervical cancer risk reduced compared to continuing smokers.
- Bladder cancer risk halved compared to continuing smokers.

5 Years:

- Lung cancer death rate for average smoker (one pack a day) decreases from 137 per 100,000 to 72 per 100,000.
- 5 to 15 years after quitting, stroke risk is reduced to that of someone who has never smoked.

10 Years and Longer:

- Precancerous cells are replaced.
- Risk of other cancers – such as those of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decrease.
- After long-term quitting the risk of death from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is reduced compared to someone who continues to smoke.