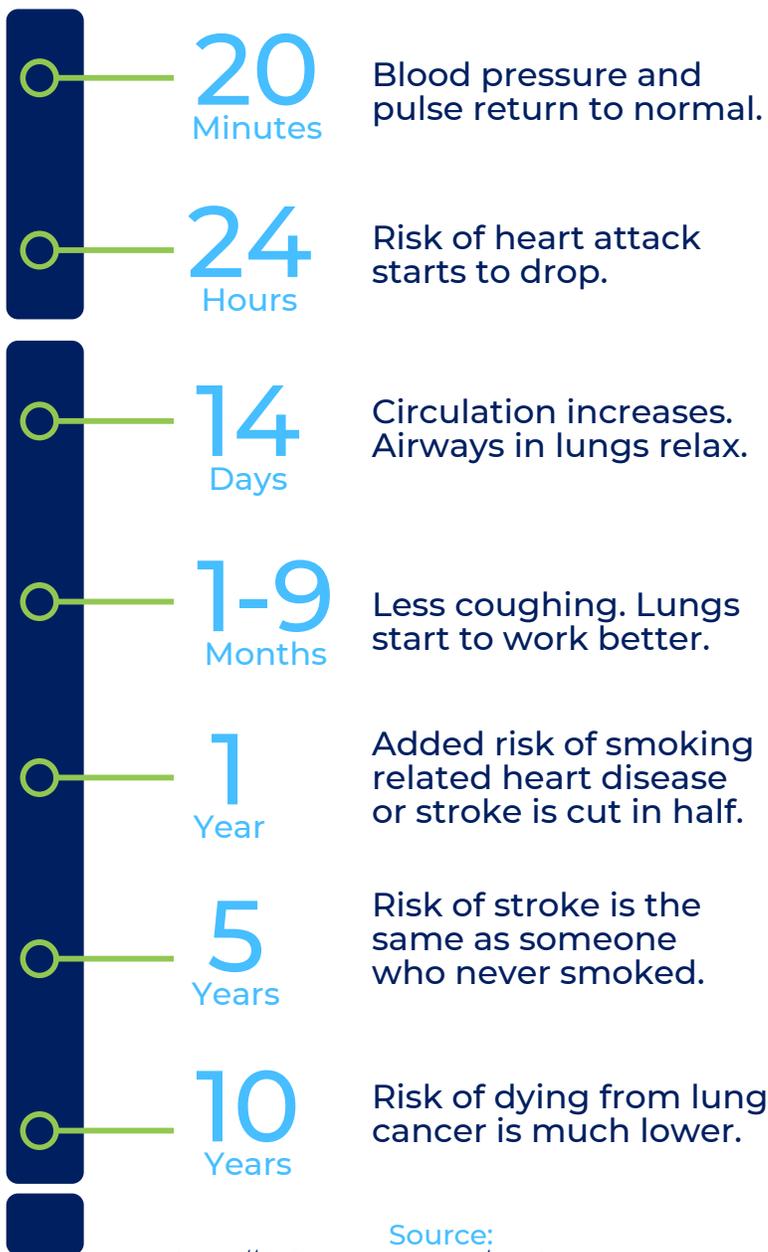


What happens when you quit smoking?



Added Benefits of Nicotine Cessation

The first thing you notice is the money you'll save. Here are some more benefits you may notice:

- Food will taste better.
- Your ability to smell will improve.
- The smell of your hair, clothes and breath will improve.
- You'll have less yellowing of your hair, teeth, and fingernails.
- You'll be less short of breath when being active (i.e. climbing stairs or light housework).
- You'll reduce damage to skin (wrinkles), and mouth (gum disease, and tooth loss).
- You won't have to leave smoke-free buildings just to have a smoke.

Nicotine can decrease blood supply and calcium absorption into the bones which can slow bone healing and weaken their structure. (UCHealth)

Source: <https://www.ucihealth.org/blog/2018/11/smoking-bone-health>

Next Steps to Quitting

What is your reason for quitting?

Your family? Your health? To save money? When you know write it down and post it somewhere you will see it every day. Remembering why you choose to quit will help when you are tempted to smoke, chew or vape.

Set your quit day.

Give yourself about a month. That's enough time to prepare but isn't so far away that you will lose sight of your goal. The best day to quit is a normal uneventful date. It may work better if your date isn't during an extra stressful time, i.e. the holidays, a vacation, a big project at work, etc.

Preparing to Quit:

- Evaluate your triggers: when and what you are doing while you use nicotine. Consider using a tracking log to write down the time of each cigarette/chew/vape and what you are doing at that time. You can see your patterns and can better plan how to avoid triggers (Examples: driving, woke up, break time at work, after a meal).
- Decide with your doctor if you should try a nicotine replacement (i.e. nicotine patches, gum, lozenges or maybe a prescription). Many of the cessation medications are covered under insurance plans. Call our Member Services team with any questions about plan coverage.
- Set your environment up for success: remove ashtrays, lighters, matches, etc. Clean and air out your house to get rid of any smoky smells. Don't forget your car as well.
- Find a support system. Whether that's friends and family a smoking cessation support group or a quitting coach, it helps to have someone to talk to when you are struggling.

Dealing with Cravings:

- Remind yourself what triggers your desire to smoke & remember your plan on how to handle it.
- Ask your support people for help when cravings hit.
- Remember your reason for quitting - if it's written down read it a few times to remind yourself why this journey is important.

Sources:

<https://www.quit.com>

<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-tobacco/benefits-of-quitting-smoking-over-time.html>

The Cravings:

- Understanding why the cravings happen: nicotine is a drug that triggers the brain to make pleasure chemicals, Once you are no longer using nicotine, the brain notices the lack of nicotine and will send signals (cravings) to try and get more. This is withdrawal.
- How long will the cravings last? From the last use, it takes 3-4 days for nicotine to completely leave the body. During this time the cravings will start & be the strongest. Each craving lasts 10-20 minutes & then lets up. While it will take your brain chemistry up to three months to return to normal, cravings begin to lessen in intensity & frequency after the first week & are gone completely in one to three months.

Try a Few of the Following Checklist Items:

- Go for a walk
- Exercise - stress can be reduced
- Take a short nap
- Do some errands
- Do a little house cleaning
- Relax in a warm shower or bath
- See your future, nicotine-free. Imagine how much better you'll feel once you stop.
- Play with a fidget tool/toy, do crafts/hobbies etc. to keep hands busy
- Use a straw, lollipop, chew gum etc. to satisfy the oral habit.