

# How Your Body Heals After Smoking Cessation

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## Why You Should Stop Smoking

Quitting smoking is the most significant thing you can do to reduce your risk for a host of diseases, including heart disease, hypertension, obesity and diabetes. Through these diseases, smoking can shorten your life by as much as 25 years.

If you still need a little nudge in the right direction, consider all of the positive things that happen when you quit smoking.

## How the Body Heals After Quitting Smoking

The body is a resilient organism that registers benefits from quitting smoking almost as soon as you put down your last cigarette. Many changes in the body occur within 20 minutes---others take years. As a non-smoker, you can expect to see positive changes in your skin and hair, eyes, ears, teeth, lungs, bones, heart and cardiovascular system and stomach.

## Positive Changes in Hair and Skin

People who stop smoking begin to notice positive changes in their hair and skin within the first week after stopping smoking. Without the toxic chemicals of cigarette smoke, the immune system improves, leaving the body more capable of fighting hair loss, rashes and skin diseases, including those of the mouth and scalp.

Non-smoking improves the skin's elasticity by returning vitamin A levels to their original levels, helps with increasing blood flow to skin and prevents premature wrinkles. Quitting smoking also reduces the incidence of psoriasis and other inflammatory skin diseases that result in itching rashes.

## Better Vision

Smokers who quit see a significant reduction in the risk of contracting cataracts. Cataracts are complications in the lenses of the eyes that leave the affected with dull, cloudy vision. After smoking cessation, the blood stream is free of toxic chemicals that are inhaled into the lungs and circulate to the eyes.

## Improvements in Hearing

After quitting, the chemicals that once damaged the arteries supplying blood to the ears are no longer present that cause premature hearing loss. The incidence of ear infections also returns to normal.

## Better Teeth and Bones

Free from the nicotine, carbon monoxide and other toxic chemicals, non-

smokers notice that the rate that they accumulate plaque on their teeth drops to that of people who have never smoked.

Carbon monoxide levels from cigarette smoke make it more difficult to carry oxygen in the blood that supplies nutrients to the bones. The non-smoker enjoys 15 percent more oxygen-carrying capacity in the red blood cells, leading to increased bone density and fewer fractures.

## Improved Functions of the Lungs and Cardiovascular System

Quitting smoking is the single-most effective way to reduce your risk for heart and lung disease. Each year, cigarette smoking is responsible for over 600,000 deaths and is directly connected to respiratory diseases like emphysema and bronchitis. Non-smokers immediately report better breathing, lung capacity and the ability to perform better during physical activity.

Within days after quitting smoking, smokers enjoy reduced risks for atherosclerosis, improvements in blood pressure and optimal changes in their cholesterol levels. Without the toxic effect of carbon monoxide, non-smokers notice that their heart rate declines and their lung volume improves.

## Reduction in Cancer Risk

After quitting smoking, smokers' risk for many types of cancer is reduced. Free from more than 60 types of toxic chemicals, non-smokers increase their potential for longer lives by avoiding not only cancer of the mouth, throat and nose, but also cancer of the esophagus, kidneys, pancreas, penis and anus.

## Resources

- [American Cancer Society](#)