

When you quit smoking

The health benefits are immediate



You don't have to wait to enjoy the health benefits from quitting cigarettes. Your body starts to change as soon you stop:¹

- **Within the first 20 minutes.** Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- **Within 12 hours.** The level of carbon monoxide in your blood returns to normal.
- **Within two to three months.** Your circulation improves and your lungs work better.
- **Within one to nine months.** You don't cough as much or feel as out of breath. The tiny hair-like structures in your lungs called cilia start working better to clean the lungs and clear mucus, lowering your risk of infection.
- **Within one year.** Your risk for heart disease is reduced by half.
- **Within two to five years.** Your risk for a stroke is the same as a nonsmoker.
- **Within five years.** Your risk for mouth, throat, esophageal and bladder cancer is cut in half.
- **Within 10 years.** Your risk for cancer of the voice box and pancreas is lower, and your risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.
- **Within 15 years.** Your risk for coronary heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker.

Quitting cigarettes also lowers your risk for diabetes and helps your blood vessels work the way they're supposed to, which is good for your heart and your lungs.

Get help and improve your chances

If you're trying to quit and need help, try these resources:

- The American Cancer Society has online guides on how to quit smoking. Visit cancer.org and go to the *Stay Healthy* tab, then scroll down to the bottom and select **Guide to Quitting Smoking**.
- The American Lung Association has a detailed list of the reasons why you should quit smoking and tips on how to do it. Visit lung.org, go to the *Stop Smoking* tab. Under the *How to Quit Smoking* section, select **More**.
- Nicotine Anonymous (nicotine-anonymous.org) and smokefree.gov both offer telephone and Internet meetings, and in-person counseling in some states. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or 1-800-ACS-2345 (227-2345) for toll-free support.

Counseling and support could double your chances of quitting.² You also can talk to your doctor about a drug treatment that might be right for you. Whatever you decide to do, there's no better time than now. You'll start enjoying the health benefits immediately, and continue to enjoy them for a long time to come.



An Anthem Company

¹ American Cancer Society website: *When smokers quit – what are the benefits over time?* (accessed June 2014); cancer.org.
² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: *Double Your Chance of Success* (accessed June 2014); cdc.gov.

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