When Smokers Quit

Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins a series of changes that continues for years.

20 minutes
- Blood pressure drops to normal
- Pulse rate drops to normal
- Body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal

8 hours
- Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- Oxygen level in blood increases to normal

48 hours
- Nerve endings start regrowing
- Ability to smell and taste is enhanced

1 to 9 months
- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decrease
- Cilia regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, reduce infection
- Body’s overall energy increases

10 years
- Lung cancer death rate similar to that of nonsmokers
- Precancerous cells are replaced
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases

24 hours
- Chance of heart attack decreases

2 weeks to 3 months
- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung function increases up to 30%

1 year
- Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker

5 years
- Lung cancer death rate for average former smoker (one pack a day) decreases by almost half
- Stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5-15 years after quitting
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is half that of a smoker’s

15 years
- Risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker