



## What happens when you quit?

**20**  
Minutes  
Blood pressure and pulse return to normal.

**24**  
Hours  
Risk of heart attack starts to drop.

**14**  
Days  
Circulation increases. Airways in lungs relax.

**1-9**  
Months  
Less coughing. Lungs start to work better.

**1**  
Year  
Added risk of smoking related heart disease or stroke is cut in half.

**5**  
Years  
Risk of stroke is the same as someone who never smoked.

**10**  
Years  
Risk of dying from lung cancer is much lower.

Source:

<https://wellnessinstitute.ca/smoking-cessation>

## 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. (UC| Health)

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. 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, etc.

# PREPARING TO QUIT: DEALING WITH CRAVINGS:

- 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, 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.
- 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.

## 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 and be the strongest. Each craving lasts 10-20 minutes and then lets up. While it will take your brain chemistry up to three months to return to normal, cravings begin to lessen in intensity and frequency after the first week and are gone completely in one to three months.

## DEALING WITH CRAVINGS:

- Remind yourself what triggers your desire to smoke and 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.

## 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 hand to mouth and/or oral habit

### Sources:

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

**Other Resources:**  
**1-800-QUITNOW**  
**www.quit.com**