

Quitting Smoking: Effects on the Human Body

Quitting smoking now greatly reduces your risk for numerous diseases, cancers, COPD, and reproductive complications. Learn detailed information regarding the stages of regeneration and benefits which can begin as soon as 20 minutes after quitting.



Smoking is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths worldwide. On average, analogue cigarettes contain approximately 600 ingredients including acetone, ARSENIC, and lead. According to the American Lung Association, once the cigarette is lit, a single cigarette produces more than 7,000 chemicals. A minimum of 69 of these chemicals are known to cause cancer. Numerous others

are considered toxic, or poisonous to the human body. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the mortality rate for those who smoke analogue cigarettes is a startling three times higher than individuals who have never smoked. It is no surprise that quitting smoking now greatly reduces your chances of being diagnosed with several forms of cancer including blood cancer, lung cancer, and throat cancer. It also lessens your risk of erectile dysfunction, COPD, chronic bronchitis, heart disease, and many other adverse health risks associated with smoking.

When quitting smoking, there are numerous physical and emotional effects the body experiences. These effects are both short-term and long-term.

Short Term Effects

- The short-term effects of quitting smoking begin within 20 minutes. Cigarettes contain ingredients and produce chemicals that speed up your heart rate, and also raises your blood pressure. According to the CDC, within 20 minutes of not smoking an analogue cigarette, your heart rate will already begin to drop down to normal levels.
- Within two hours of not smoking, your heart rate and blood pressure will have returned to almost completely normal levels. Your peripheral circulation may also begin to improve during this time. This means you may begin to feel warmth in your fingertips and other extremities. This is due to your circulation improving. However, during this time you may also begin to experience some of the adverse effects of quitting smoking: withdrawal

symptoms. These symptoms may include anxiety, increased appetite, irritability, sleeplessness, and intense cravings.

- After only 12 hours of not smoking analogue cigarettes, your blood oxygen levels raise to near normal levels. As stated by the CDC, carbon monoxide is released from a lit cigarette and inhaled with the smoke. At high levels, carbon monoxide is considered to be toxic to the human body. Carbon monoxide also bonds effectively to blood cells, prohibiting them from bonding successfully with oxygen. This can lead to serious cardiovascular complications. After 12 hours of not smoking, these carbon monoxide levels decrease, allowing your blood cells to once again bond effectively with oxygen.
- Since the risk of heart attack is 70% higher than those who do not smoke, after 24 hours the risk of heart attack begins to decrease.
- The sense of smell and taste rely on nerve endings. Smoking deadens these nerve endings. However, according to the Cleveland Clinic, these nerve endings begin to regrow within 48 hours of not smoking. This means that your sense of smell and taste will begin to increase, allowing you to experience more flavor and aromas.
- Approximately three days after quitting, the nicotine levels in your system will have been depleted. However, with this absence comes greater symptoms of withdrawal. Increased tension, cravings, irritability, and other symptoms may be strongly present. [There are several methods used to combat these symptoms which will be addressed at the end of this article.]
- After two to three weeks after quitting smoking, numerous regenerative processes begin to take place in the body. Some of which are very noticeable. According to the American Heart Association, your lung capacity and performance will begin to regenerate and improve, as will your circulation. This will allow you to perform intense activities such as exercising, running, and various other physical activities that rely on endurance and stamina.
- Between one and nine months after quitting smoking your lungs dramatically begin to repair themselves. One of the adverse effects of smoking analogue cigarettes is the damage to the cilia. Cilia are the small hair-like organelles which assist in reducing your risk of infections by pushing mucus out of your lungs. The regenerative process your lungs undergo include the repair of the cilia. This increases the lung function and performance, as well as reducing the risk of infection.

During this restorative period, nicotine has been absent from your system since the first several weeks of quitting smoking. However, withdrawal symptoms can remain for upwards of six months.

Long Term effects

- The risk for any type of coronary heart disease is much greater for a smoker. According to the CDC, approximately one year after not smoking your overall risk for coronary heart disease decreases by half.
- Another primary adverse effect smoking has on your health is the constricting of blood vessels. The constricting of the blood vessels greatly increase the chance of stroke. A primary factor which causes this is carbon monoxide. Between five and 15 years after quitting smoking, the chance of stroke decreases to that of an average non-smoker, according to the CDC. This restorative process takes time, but results in an overall decrease in an ex-smoker's mortality rate.
- The CDC further states that after 10 years of not smoking, the risk of lung cancer, cancer of the throat, mouth, esophagus, and major organs also decreases by approximately half that of a traditional cigarette smoker. Medical practitioners report that nearly 90% of all lung cancer-related deaths are a result of smoking traditional cigarettes.

Within 15 years of quitting smoking, nearly all of the restorative processes are complete. Your risk of heart disease is no greater than someone who has never smoked an analogue cigarette. According to the American Heart Association, on average, non-smokers live 14-15 years longer than those who smoke cigarettes. With restored lung function, circulation, and cardiovascular health, those years are spent being active and healthy.

Symptoms of Withdrawal

Symptoms of withdrawal can be avoided altogether by switching to e-cigarettes. According to an article by Medical News Today, multiple studies have shown that e-cigarettes are safer than traditional analogue cigarettes and are more effective in assisting individuals quit smoking than patches or nicotine gum. Containing nicotine without the additional ingredients and chemical production associated with traditional cigarettes and combustion, e-cigarettes greatly reduce or completely void symptoms of withdrawal.

<https://quitday.org/quitting-effects/>