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Smoking and Lung Cancer

While smoking is not the cause of all lung cancers, it does cause the majority of cases. Even if you have been diagnosed with lung cancer, lifestyle changes can help you manage symptoms of the disease and your treatment.

By quitting smoking, you can immediately gain some benefits from enhanced circulation, lowered blood pressure, and increased lung function. These benefits will help your body better tolerate and heal from surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation treatment. The American Cancer Society website outlines the benefits of quitting smoking.

When Smokers Quit – What Are the Benefits Over Time?

20 minutes after quitting: Your heart rate and blood pressure drops.

12 hours after quitting: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

1 to 9 months after quitting: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

1 year after quitting: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

5 years after quitting: Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5 to 15 years after quitting.

10 years after quitting: The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease.

15 years after quitting: The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker's.

Source: [American Cancer Society](#)