

Long-Term Effects— Participant

OBJECTIVE: *To explore the numerous long-term benefits associated with ending commercial tobacco use.*

Health Benefits —

The American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cite the following benefits of ending tobacco use:

20 minutes after a smoker quits:

- Blood pressure returns to a level close to that before the last cigarette
- Pulse rate drops to normal rate
- Body temperature of hands and feet increase to normal

8 Hours:

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

24 Hours:

- Chance of heart attack decreases

48 Hours:

- Nerve endings start re-growing
- Ability to smell and to taste things enhances

72 Hours:

- Bronchial tubes relax, making breathing easier
- Lung capacity increases

2 weeks to 3 months after a smoker quits:

- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung function increases up to 30%

1 to 9 months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases
- Cilia reactivate in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce infection
- Body's overall energy level increases

1 year after a smoker quits:

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

5 years after a smoker quits:

- 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 to 15 years after quitting

10 years after a smoker quits:

- Lung cancer death rate becomes similar to that of nonsmokers
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases.

Remember, by quitting commercial tobacco use you have added precious time to your life. Think about how you want to spend those added days and years?

Household Benefits

Second Hand Smoke

The benefits of quitting extend far beyond the limits of just the individual. Exposure to Second Hand Smoke also poses a real and significant threat to family members and friends. By quitting now and establishing a smoke-free home, you can provide a healthier environment for the people you love.

Second Hand Smoke Facts

- o Second Hand Smoke (SHS) is both fatal and has numerous non-fatal health effects. Over 60 compounds in tobacco smoke are known carcinogens.
- o SHS exposure causes **lung and nasal sinus cancer, heart disease, and sudden infant death syndrome**. Serious impacts of SHS on children **include asthma induction and exacerbation, bronchitis and pneumonia, middle ear infection, chronic respiratory symptoms, and low birth rate**
- o SHS is the **third leading cause of preventable death** in this country, killing 53,000 nonsmokers in the U.S. each year. For every eight smokers the tobacco industry kills, it takes one nonsmoker with them.
- o Second Hand Smoke is a Group A (Human) Carcinogen—a substance known to cause cancer in humans. There is no safe level of exposure for Group A toxins.
- o Smoking restrictions in workplaces, restaurants, and other public areas significantly reduce exposure to SHS.
- o Even **half an hour of secondhand smoke exposure causes heart damage** similar to that of habitual smokers. Nonsmoker's heart arteries showed a reduced ability to dilate, diminishing the ability of the heart to get life giving blood. In addition, the same half-hour of secondhand smoke activates blood platelets, which can initiate the process of arteriosclerosis (blockage of the heart's arteries) that leads to a heart attack. These effects explain other research showing that nonsmokers regularly exposed to SHS suffer death or morbidity rate 30 percent higher than that of unexposed nonsmokers.

Source: <http://www.no-smoke.0r2/ets.html> Accessed: 11/21/02

Were you aware of the many risks associated with second hand smoke? How do you feel about providing a safer environment for those that you care about?

Community Benefits

The benefits of quitting extend far beyond the confines of the home and workplace as well. Think back to the list of factors that effected your decision to take up smoking in the first place. Was social pressure on the list? Was it the norm in our household or social group? Did it seem like everyone was doing it?

It will take one individual at a time to make ending commercial tobacco use the **new** norm in your community. Every individual has the power to influence change. Think about how many young people in your life witnessed your stop using cigarettes. Now think of all the people you encounter throughout the day, people who will never see you light up and be encouraged to do the same. You are a positive roll model for all of these people! Think about all of the people in your life that you can continue to encourage and support in their decision to quit as well.

A Note about Relapse

As difficult as it may be to face, most smokers do not quit entirely on their first try. Researchers have found that Nicotine may be even more addictive than heroine or cocaine! Some people require 5-7 attempts to become permanently smoke-free. Do not lose heart if you do relapse. You can conquer this habit by trying again until you do it!

If a relapse does occur:

1. Learn from the situation — Determine what factors caused you to smoke, and how you will cope with the situation again in the future without turning to cigarettes.
2. Do not lose hope! — Most relapses occur the first week to 3 months after quitting. The body is still dependent on nicotine during this time period and the withdrawal symptoms may continue to be present.
3. Seek help — Contact the facilitator or other group members to gain support and encouragement to quit and stay quit.
4. Try Again! — Start the next day as an ex-smoker once again!