

What to Expect When You Quit

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For someone who may smoke, they might wonder if quitting is worth going through the cravings and withdrawals. Common symptoms of withdrawal include cravings, restlessness, trouble concentrating or sleeping, irritability, anxiety, increases in appetite and weight gain. Despite these symptoms, there's a lot of benefits to quitting! The human body can heal itself over time and it can happen within minutes! Withdrawal can be challenging, but it can be helpful to look at the symptoms of withdrawal as signs that the body is recovering and changing for the better.

Here's a timeline of what to expect when someone quits smoking:

- **20 minutes** – their pulse and blood pressure drop back to normal. Their hands and feet warm up to regular body temperature.
- **8 hours** – the body has half the amount of nicotine and carbon monoxide in the blood. This means that the oxygen levels go back to normal as these chemical levels drop.
 - Some cravings and doubts show up, but this is normal. Find ways of distraction until these pass.
- **12 hours** – their carbon monoxide level is back to normal, and their heart doesn't need to pump as much to get oxygen to the body.
- **24 hours** – the risk of having a heart attack is lowered.
- **48 hours** – their sense of smell and taste start to improve, and their lungs purge out mucus and leftover gunk from cigarettes. There's *no more nicotine* in the body!
 - The toughest withdrawal symptoms also show up (dizziness, hunger, tiredness, headaches) but make sure the plan is still in place and lean on a support network like friends, family, or a quitting hotline.

- **3 days** – their breathing becomes easier, and they have more energy. The lungs are starting to recover.
- **2 weeks to 3 months** – their lungs are stronger, and exercise is easier to do. The risk of heart attack continues to decrease.
 - They've made it through the hardest part of withdrawal, but cravings can still exist. Everyone has different triggers for wanting to smoke but they can still stick to their plan and ask for help if needed.
- **3 to 9 months** – their energy levels rise, and they can take deep and clear breaths now.
- **1 year** – their risk of heart disease is now half of what it was a year ago.
- **5 years** – the chances of stroke and cervical cancer are now the same as a nonsmoker. Compared to when they first quit, they're half as likely to get cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder.
- **10 years** – compared to someone who still smokes, they're now half as likely to die from lung cancer. And the chances they'll get cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas also decrease.
- **15 years** – the chances of getting heart disease are the same as if they never smoked.

If you or someone you know needs help quitting, call 800-300-8086 or 800-600-8191