



# HEALTH BENEFITS START ON DAY ONE

Discover the immediate and long-term benefits of quitting smoking.

## Immediate benefits\*

Heart rate and blood pressure, which are abnormally high while smoking, begin to return to normal.

**Twelve hours after quitting**, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. (Carbon monoxide reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.)

**Within two weeks of quitting**, you might notice it's easier to walk up the stairs because you may be less short of breath. Cilia – tiny broom-like hairs that clean your lungs – start to regrow and regain normal function very quickly after you quit smoking.

**Within several months** of quitting, people can expect substantial improvements in lung function.

## Long-term benefits\*

**Quitting reduces the risk of cancer**, heart disease and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

**Regardless of age, you are less likely to die from a smoking-related illness** than those who continue to smoke.

**You can be tobacco-free.**  
**For help, visit [www.BeTobaccoFree.gov](http://www.BeTobaccoFree.gov).**

## Start to quit

Prepare an action plan with these five steps.\*\*

1. Set a quit date. Pick a date within the next two weeks. Don't choose a day where you know you will be busy, stressed or tempted to smoke.
2. Tell family and friends. Explain to them how they can help you quit and what your triggers are. Quitting is easier when you have support.
3. Anticipate and plan for challenges. Cravings and withdrawal are common. Avoid triggers – specific persons, places or activities that make you feel like smoking.
4. Remove cigarettes and lighters from your home, work and car. Don't save one pack of cigarettes "just in case." Remove the smell of smoke by cleaning your clothes, car and home.
5. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) options, such as gum, patches or lozenges.
6. Reward yourself. Celebrate being smoke free for 24 hours, one week and one month. Treat yourself with a nice dinner, a day at the movies or any other fun smoke-free activity.

**Get ready to quit with more helpful information at [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).**

**Together, all the way.®**



\* National Cancer Institute. "How Quitting Improves Your Health." <https://smokefree.gov/veterans/reasons-to-quit/how-quitting-improves-your-health> (accessed March 13, 2017)

\*\* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Build Your Quit Plan." <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/guide/quit-plan.html> (last reviewed/last updated February 22, 2017)

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