

Fact Sheet 7—It's Never Too Late To Quit

Your body begins to repair damage caused by cigarette smoking in remarkable ways even within minutes of your last cigarette.

Within 20 minutes of your last cigarette:

- Blood pressure drops
- Pulse rate decreases
- Body temperature of hands and feet increases

Within 24 hours:

- Chance of heart attack decreases

Within 48 hours:

- Nerve endings start re-growing
- Ability to smell and taste are enhanced

Within 72 hours:

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

Within Weeks to 3 months:

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

Within 5 years:

- Lung cancer death rate for average smoker (1 pack per day) decreases from 137 per 100,000 people to 72 per 100,000

Within 10 years:

- Lung cancer death rate for average smoker drops to 12 deaths per 100,000 – almost the rate of non-smokers
- Pre-cancerous cells are replaced
- Other cancers, such as those of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas, decrease