

## Smoking Cessation

According to the Surgeon General, quitting smoking is the single most important step a smoker can take to improve the length and quality their lives. As soon as you quit, your body begins to repair the damage caused by smoking. Of course, it's best to quit early in life, but even someone who quits later in life will improve their health.

There are many reasons why you should decide to quit smoking and these including:

- **Your Own Enjoyment!**  
Food tastes better when you quit because smoking interferes with you sense of taste  
Your sense of smell improves allowing you to enjoy the enjoyable scents of flowers  
You can make it through a long movie or airplane flight with no craving issues  
Smokers cough will disappear after a few weeks of quitting  
You will have more energy to enjoy your life
- **Cost: It is expensive to smoke!**  
If a pack of cigarettes costs “Only” \$5.00 each, smoking one pack per day adds up to \$1,825.00 each year.
- **Convenience: Smoking is a hassle!**  
More states and cities have passed clean indoor air laws making bars, restaurants and other public places smoke free. So you are forced to go outside many times a day to have a smoke, even if it’s cold, raining or snowing.
- **Friends and Family Health**  
Cigarette smoke harms anyone who inhales it, (Second hand smoke), weather young or old. It causes more chest colds and ear infections in babies and breathing issues in the elderly.

Secondhand smoke causes approximately 7,330 deaths from lung cancer and 33,950 death from heart disease a year according to the American Lung Association. Between 1964 and 2014, 2.5 million people died from exposure to secondhand smoke according to a report from the U.S. Surgeon General. The report also concluded that secondhand smoke is a definitive cause of stroke.

There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and even short term exposure can increase the risk of heart attacks due to the toxic or carcinogenic chemicals.

Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to young children. It is responsible for between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in infants and children under 18 months of age and also causes 460 sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths in the U.S. annually according to the American Lung Association. There is also a correlation between smoke exposure and buildup of fluid in the middle ear of children.

The health benefits to you of quitting smoking are quickly apparent. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, some of these benefits include:

**20 Minutes After Quitting:**

- Your heart rate drops to a normal level.

**12 to 24 Hours After Quitting:**

- The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- The risk of heart attack is significantly reduced

**2 Weeks to 3 Months After Quitting:**

- Your risk of having a heart attack begins to drop.
- Your lung function begins to improve.

**1 to 9 Months After Quitting:**

- Your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

**1 Year After Quitting:**

- Your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

**5 to 15 Years After Quitting:**

- Your risk of having a stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's.
- Your risk of getting cancer of the mouth, throat, or esophagus is half that of a smoker's.

**10 Years After Quitting:**

- Your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker's.
- Your risk of getting bladder cancer is half that of a smoker's.
- Your risk of getting cervical cancer or cancer of the larynx, kidney or pancreas decreases.

**15 Years After Quitting:**

- Your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as that of a nonsmoker.

Now that you know some of the many reasons to quit smoking, make that choice to quit and be good to yourself, your health and the health of your loved ones. Check with your Personal Care Physician at your next visit regarding your choice to quit smoking for a discussion and possible referral for services to help you quit. Or better yet, schedule a visit now with your physician to discuss quitting and get on the road to a healthier, happier life style beginning now!