

SMOKING CESSATION

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- After 20 minutes, your blood pressure and heart rate normalize.
- After 8 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the body decreases and the oxygen level in the blood increases to normal.
- After 48 hours, your chances of having a heart attack begin to decrease and your sense of smell and taste start to improve. You will start to smell better to others!
- After 72 hours, your lung capacity increases and breathing becomes easier.
- After 2 weeks to 3 months, blood circulation improves and your lung function can improve by up to 30%.
- After 6 months, coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath improve.
- After 1 year, your risk of suffering a smoking-related heart attack drops by 50%.
- After 5 years, your risk of stroke normalizes.
- After 10 years, the risk of dying from lung cancer decreases by 50%.
- After 15 years, the risk of dying from a heart attack is equal to that of a person who has never smoked.
- There is also, understandably, a financial as well as a health gain when you stop smoking. It certainly puts more money in your pocket!

SMOKING KILLS

- Tobacco use is the world's single most preventable cause of illness and death.
- Tobacco smoke kills over 37,000 people in Canada each year.
- Tobacco contains nicotine (among 4000 other chemicals) which is absorbed quickly into the body through the lining of the mouth, nose and lungs. After one puff, levels of nicotine, a central nervous system stimulant, peak within 10 seconds and the effects wane in a few seconds necessitating another dose through another puff and so on.
- The average smoker will take in ten puffs of a cigarette in five minutes so a person who smokes 30 cigarettes per day will get 300 "hits" of nicotine to the brain each day.
- Once in the brain the nicotine activates a brain chemical called dopamine which helps regulate the pleasure centres in the brain and actually increases the desire to smoke more.
- Nicotine addiction is comparable to that of heroine and cocaine in its potential for dependency. Eight out of ten people who try smoking end up continuing.
- Continuing to smoke will create potential lung, cervical, esophageal and mouth cancers. It increases the risk of heart problems, stroke and impotence in males. Smoking also increases the risk of other health problems such as chronic lung disease.
- If you try nicotine replacement and are unsuccessful, your doctor may prescribe certain medications that may help. The goal of these medications is to reduce the intensity of the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. They may also reduce the rate of failure by decreasing the desire to smoke. Even with this method, it is important to join a support group to help you through this important step in your life.

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