

Fact Sheet: When You Quit Smoking

When you quit smoking your health immediately starts to improve. The physical benefits begin within 20 minutes of your last cigarette while some take as long as 10 years to be that of a nonsmoker.

20 minutes:

- Blood pressure and pulse rate begin to return to normal
- Circulation to hands and feet improves
- Fibers in the bronchial tubes (cilia) begin to move again, removing irritants and bacteria from the lungs

8 hours:

- Carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal
- Oxygen level in the blood increases to normal

24 hours:

- Risk for heart attack decreases

48 hours:

- Nerve endings begin to regrow

72 hours:

- Bronchial tubes relax, making breathing easier
- Lung capacity starts increasing

2 weeks to 2 months:

- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung functions increase up to 30%

1 to 9 months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue and shortness of breath decreases
- Cilia regrow in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean lungs, and reduce infection
- Body's overall energy level increases

3 to 5 years:

- Risk of dying of a heart attack decreases to that of a nonsmoker

10 years:

- Risk of dying of lung cancer decreases to that of a nonsmoker
- Precancerous cells are replaced with healthy cells
- Other cancer occurrences, such as those of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decrease. (There are at least 30 chemicals in tobacco smoke that cause cancer.)

If you would like help quitting call Washtenaw County Public Health (734) 544-6874 for smoking cessation information and resources.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Health Services Access to speak to a public health nurse at 734-544-3050 or 1-800-440-7548.

Visit our website at: www.eWashtenaw.org or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: www.cdc.gov

