

# *‘Quitline’ assistance provides help to stop smoking*

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**A**ny day is a great day to stop smoking.

According to the American Cancer Society, when you quit smoking:

- After just 20 minutes, your blood pressure drops to a level close to that before the last cigarette and the temperature of your hands and feet increases to normal.
- After just 8 hours, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- After just 24 hours, your chance of a heart attack decreases.
- Two weeks to 3 months after quitting, your circulation improves and your lung function increases up to 30 percent.
- After 1 to 9 months of not smoking, coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease.
- After 1 year, the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker’s.
- After 10 years of not smoking, the lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker’s. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decrease.
- After 15 years, the risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker’s.

Quitting smoking is not easy because nicotine is as addictive as heroin or cocaine. Smokers must overcome the physical addiction, plus the emotional, psychological dependence smoking provides.

So, when giving up smoking, an individual must deal with the withdrawal symptoms as well as break a long-held habit of reaching for a cigarette after a meal, when driving or when under pressure at home or work.

Today, numerous counseling services and medicines are available to help smokers quit successfully.

The most effective way to quit is to use a combination of medicine, a method to change personal habits, and emotional support, according to the cancer society. To provide that personal, emotional help, the cancer society offers a free “Quitline” to help people kick the habit.

Those who seek help to quit smoking double their chance of success, the cancer society reports. To sign up for “Quitline” assistance, visit the cancer society’s web site, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), or call 1-800-ACS-2345. The society has trained counselors available to help guide you through the steps needed to successfully stop smoking.

If you’ve tried quitting – as most smokers have – the counseling service may provide the needed support to overcome your smoking addiction and achieve a healthier lifestyle.

For additional information on how to quit smoking and the various medicines/therapies to help you stop smoking, visit the American Cancer Society web site at: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). Join the 46 million Americans who have kicked the smoking habit.