

You Can Diminish the Damage Caused by Years of Smoking

Many people hesitate to quit smoking because they think the damage is already done to their body. Tobacco smoke does damage every body system, but it is never too late to reap the benefits of quitting.

Tobacco smoke contains a deadly combination of chemicals. We will look at just three of them. Most of the publicity is aimed at the addictive powers of nicotine. Nicotine is what causes the strong withdrawal symptoms for the first few days of stopping smoking. It also raises your blood pressure and your heart rate, putting you at increased risk for heart attack and stroke.

Tar is a combination of chemicals that forms a sticky coating on the lining of your lungs. It also builds up in the lining of the throat and mouth. Tar is the main cancer-causing chemical in cigarette smoke. This explains why smokers are frequently diagnosed with lung, throat, and oral cancers.

Carbon monoxide is absorbed from your lungs, directly into the bloodstream. It blocks the oxygen carrying capacity of your red blood cells. That means less oxygen gets to your brain, your heart, and all your muscles. As the carbon monoxide diminishes the available oxygen to your heart, the nicotine is making it work harder by increasing the rate. This is the reason that smoking is responsible for 25% of all fatal heart attacks.

Once the addiction to smoking is overcome, the health benefits of quitting smoking begin almost immediately. Only 20 minutes after your last cigarette, your blood pressure and heart rate return to normal, and the circulation to your fingers and toes improves. Eight hours later, the carbon monoxide is gone from your body, and your oxygen level returns to normal. One day after your last cigarette, your chance of having a heart attack begins to decrease. Two days after quitting your sense of smell and taste begin to improve.

Over the next few weeks you'll find that walking becomes easier, coughing and shortness of breathe decreases, and your ability to fight off infection increases. You will also start to see the benefits in your skin, as wrinkles will be less visible due to the increased circulation and oxygen in your body. Your risk for developing gum disease is also decreasing.

One year after smoking, your risk of developing heart disease is one-half of when you were a smoker.

Five years after quitting your chances of developing mouth, throat and esophageal cancer are one-half of when you were a smoker.

All of these changes are the body's natural healing response. Here are a few simple things you can do to help your body's natural regeneration. You can begin a daily walking program. It doesn't have to be anything strenuous, just adding several extra steps to your day will help. This will increase your circulation and help your body dispose of toxins that built up while you were a smoker. You can increase the amount of pure water and fresh vegetable juice you consume. This will assist your own natural detoxification processes. Increase the amount of fresh vegetables like broccoli, spinach and sweet potatoes that you consume. These will supply your body with needed vitamins and fiber to rebuild and restore your cells. If you are in good physical shape, you might want to consider some of the accelerated toxin elimination methods. Contact your health professional to see what methods are suitable and safe for you.

Your body has an amazing ability to restore and rejuvenate itself, even after years of neglect and abuse. It is never too late to reap the benefits of quitting smoking.

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About the Author

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