

What Happens When You Quit

A Timeline for Quitting Smoking or Vaping

Every hour without nicotine gives your body a chance to repair itself — and the benefits begin before the craving ends.

The First Day

20 minutes

- Heart rate and blood pressure begin to drop
- Circulation improves; hands and feet may feel warmer

2–8 hours

- Nicotine levels fall quickly
- Oxygen levels rise as carbon monoxide clears
- Cravings, restlessness, or headaches may begin

24 hours

- Carbon monoxide is largely gone from the body
 - Risk of heart attack already begins to decrease
 - Taste and smell may start to sharpen
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The First Few Days

48 hours

- Nicotine is essentially out of the body
- Nerve endings begin healing
- Taste and smell noticeably improve
- Mood swings or sleep disruption are common

72 hours

- Breathing becomes easier as airways relax
- Lung capacity begins to increase
- Withdrawal symptoms often peak — then begin to fade

This is often the turning point.

The First Weeks

1 week

- Circulation continues to improve
- Cravings become less constant
- Walking and daily activities feel easier

2 weeks

- Lung function improves
 - Energy levels rise
 - Stress feels more manageable
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The First Months

1 month

- Coughing and shortness of breath decrease
- The lungs' natural cleaning system begins working again
- Fewer respiratory infections

2 months

- Circulation is significantly improved
- Physical stamina continues to increase
- Cravings become more situational than constant

3 months

- Lung function can improve by up to 30%
 - Brain chemistry stabilizes
 - Mood, focus, and sleep improve
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Long-Term Benefits

6 months

- Less coughing, mucus, and chest tightness
- Stronger immune system
- Fewer daily cravings

1 year

- Risk of heart disease is cut in half
- Lungs and blood vessels continue to heal

5 years

- Risk of stroke drops to that of a non-smoker
- Risk of several cancers is cut in half

10–15 years

- Risk of lung cancer drops significantly
 - Risk of heart disease approaches that of someone who never used nicotine
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Cravings are not a sign of weakness — they are proof your body is healing.