

## The Great American Smokeout Thursday, November 19, 2009



On the third Thursday of November there is an annual event that takes place to encourage people to make healthier choices for their lives. This particular event is the Great American Smokeout. On this day many Americans make the decision to quit smoking for the day and are inspired to make a long term plan to quit for good. Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death in the United States. Each year, an estimated 443,000 people die prematurely from smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke, and another 8.6 million have a serious illness caused by smoking. Smokers have a higher risk of developing bronchitis, emphysema, heart disease, atherosclerosis (buildup of fat in the arteries), and having a heart attack or stroke. In the United States, an estimated 26.2 million men and 20.9 million women are smokers.

No matter how old you are or how long you've smoked, quitting will help you live longer. People who stop smoking before age 50 cut their risk of dying in the next 15 years in half compared with those who continue to smoke. More than 45.7 million Americans have quit smoking. You can be one of them too!



***20 minutes after quitting:*** Your heart rate and blood pressure drops.

**12 hours after quitting:** The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

**2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:** Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

**1 to 9 months after quitting:** Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

**1 year after quitting:** The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

**5 years after quitting:** Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5 to 15 years after quitting.

**10 years after quitting:** The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease.

**15 years after quitting:** The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

[The Macomb County Health Department](#) offers smoking cessation counseling in order to decrease exposure to secondhand smoke and reduce the number of smokers. The Health Department also participates in coalitions as well as national initiatives like the “Great American Smokeout” and other community smoke-free projects. The Michigan Tobacco Quit Line, 1-800- 480-7848, provides cessation services to Michigan residents that want to quit using tobacco. The Quit Line offers a personal health coach and participant toolkits to help tobacco users gain self-confidence and the incentive they need to quit permanently.



Sources:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
American Cancer Society  
American Heart Association  
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