



Smoking

Cigarette smoking is the largest preventable cause of death and illness in Australia. Smoking accounts for approximately 20,000 deaths in Australia each year. It has been found to increase people's risk of developing serious illnesses and diseases such as heart disease, cancer and stroke and is a major contributor to respiratory diseases like emphysema, chronic bronchitis and asthma.

The effects of smoking can be easily recognised when people start exercising. A smoker would notice they become exhausted more easily, suffer shortness of breath, and have little endurance. However it is important to remember the effects of smoking begin to reduce quickly once the habit is stopped.

The following is a timeline of recovery, once a person stops smoking.



2 Hours: Nicotine is out of your system

6 Hours: Heart rate slows, and blood pressure drops

12 Hours: Carbon monoxide out of your system and lungs function better

2 Days: Taste buds and smell improve

3 Weeks: Improved lung function is noticed during exercise

2 Months: Blood flow to the hands and feet improve

3 Months: Lung function continues to improve and is able to remove mucous. Blood flow to the limbs also improves.

It doesn't matter how long someone has been smoking to notice immediate benefits of quitting. Continued smoking into later life is associated with physical disability, poor health and depressive symptoms, lower physical activity, bone density and lung function.

The risk of dying from heart disease is reduced by 50% one year after quitting. For those smokers who already have heart disease, the risk of recurrent heart attacks will decrease by 50% when they stop. Quitting will also reduce the risk of stroke. For long-term quitters, the risk of dying from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is much lower than in people who continue to smoke.

It is important to note there are no positive health benefits of smoking - only negative.