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Total Wellness[®] BECOMING A TOTAL PERSON[®]

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The Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general. Quitting smoking brings fast rewards, including:

- ◆ *20 minutes after quitting:* Your heart rate drops.
- ◆ *8 hours after quitting:* The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- ◆ *24 hours after quitting:* Your chance of a heart attack decreases.
- ◆ *2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:* Your circulation improves and your lung function increases up to 30 percent.
- ◆ *1 to 9 months after quitting:* Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease.
- ◆ *1 year after quitting:* The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- ◆ *5-15 years after quitting:* Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker.
- ◆ *10 years after quitting:* Your lung cancer risk is about half that of a continuing smoker's.
- ◆ *15 years after quitting:* The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker's.

Source: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org

Ready, Set... Quit Smoking!

Quitting smoking is one of the hardest things a smoker can do, but it's also one of the most important decisions they can ever make. In fact, it could save their life. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the following tips will help smokers cross the finish line of smoking:

- *Get ready.* • Set a quit date. • Get rid of all cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and workplace. • Don't let people smoke around you. • Review your past attempts to quit. Consider what worked before and what did not.
 - Once you quit, don't smoke – not even a small puff!
- *Seek support from others.* To find support: • Tell your family, friends, and coworkers that you're quitting and ask for their support. Ask them not to smoke around you or leave cigarettes out where you can see them. • Talk to your health care provider about ways to quit. • Get individual, group, or telephone counseling and double your chances of success.
- *Adopt new skills and behaviors.* • Talk to someone, go for a walk, or get busy with a task. • Change your routine. Use a different route to work. Eat breakfast in a different place. • Do something to reduce your stress. Take a hot bath or read a book. • Exercise to help relieve tension and the urge to smoke. You'll also burn off those extra pounds you may gain. • Keep your



hands busy. Do crossword puzzles, woodworking, or needlework. • Enjoy having a clean tasting mouth. Brush your teeth often and use mouthwash.

- *Ask your doctor if medication would help.* If so, use it correctly. Medications can help you stop smoking and lessen the urge to smoke.
- *Be prepared for difficult times.* To overcome difficult situations: • Avoid drinking alcohol. Drinking lowers your chances of success. • Avoid being around people who smoke or in places where smoking is allowed. • To avoid weight gain, eat a healthy diet and stay active. Don't let weight gain distract you from your main goal – quitting smoking. • Improve your mood in ways other than smoking. Read motivational quotes or listen to uplifting music.

For more information on quitting smoking, visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov, the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org or www.smokefree.gov.