Great American Smokeout

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By Nan Maley, RN
Director of Corporate Wellness
Sullivan Benefits

The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day. By quitting, even for one day, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life; one that can lead to reducing cancer risk.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the US, yet about 43.8 million Americans still smoke cigarettes; Nearly 1 in every 5 adults. As of 2010, there were also 13.2 million cigar smokers in the US, and 2.2 million who smoke tobacco in pipes, and other dangerous addictive forms of tobacco.

When smokers quit, what are the benefits over time?

20 minutes after quitting
Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
(Effect of smoking on arterial stiffness and pulse pressure amplification, Mahmud A, Feely J. *Hypertension*. 2003:41:183)

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) start to 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 continuing smoker’s.

5 years after quitting
Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.
10 years after quitting
The risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking. The risk of cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases.


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

(Tobacco Control: Reversal of Risk After Quitting Smoking. IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Vol. 11. 2007. p 11)

These are just a few of the benefits of quitting smoking for good. Quitting smoking lowers the risk of diabetes, lets blood vessels work better, and helps the heart and lungs. Quitting while you are younger will reduce your health risks more, but quitting at any age can give back years of life that would be lost by continuing to smoke.

Source: American Cancer Society

Helping your employees become SMOKEFREE is important. Contact Sullivan Benefits for assistance in learning more about the various wellness tools and resources available on the American Cancer Society website.

Congratulations, just taking the time to read this article is a positive step toward introducing wellness and the benefits available from a healthier lifestyle. Thank you for your time and THINK WELLNESS!