

Today, smokers across the nation are taking part in the American Cancer Society’s **“Great American Smokeout”** event. This is a great opportunity to quit, or to encourage someone you know to quit smoking.

By quitting – even for one day – smokers will be taking an important step toward a healthier life and reducing their risk of cancer and heart disease.

**Quitting smoking is hard, but it will help you get one step closer to good health. For example:**

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| --- | --- |
| * **After 20 minutes smoke-free:** | Your heart rate and blood pressure drop to a healthier level |
| * **After 8 hours smoke-free:** | Your blood-oxygen level returns to normal |
| * **After 12 hours smoke-free:** | The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal |
| * **After 2 days smoke-free:** | Your heart attack risk begins to drop |
| * **After 3 days smoke-free:** | Your ability to smell and taste improves |
| * **After 2-3 weeks smoke-free:** | Your lung function improves |
| * **After 3 months smoke-free:** | Your lung function improves by up to 30% |
| * **After 1 year smoke-free:** | Your risk of heart disease is **cut in half** |

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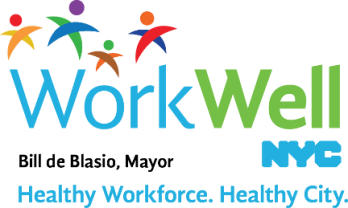
**Need help?** Call **212-676-2393** to enroll in the Employee Smoking Cessation Assistance Program ([ESCAPE](http://on.nyc.gov/2mpwSa6)), which is available to ALL New York City government employees and their families.

ESCAPE offers the following quit-smoking support, **FREE** of charge:

* Medications (nicotine patch, gum and lozenge, Zyban® (bupropion) and Chantix® (varenicline))
* Confidential counseling provided by trained specialists in-person or by phone

**Call 212-676-2393 for an appointment.**

\*If you get the ESCAPE voicemail, please leave a message with your name and phone number and an ESCAPE counselor will call you back within 2 days.

[](http://on.nyc.gov/2AFumj1)

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