Handout: Quitting Smoking and What to Expect

It is often believed that after quitting smoking there are only negative side effects, but this is not true. There are many positive side effects from quitting smoking, some of which occur in only minutes after avoiding tobacco! The fastest side effect occurs only **20 minutes after you quit** where your heart rate and blood pressure return to normal. Some other positive side effects are as follows:

- **After 24 hours**: CO (carbon monoxide) levels in your blood return to normal and your circulation improves. Your blood pressure and heart rate normalize.
- **After 6 weeks**: coughs disappear, excess mucous production begins to subside, breathing is easier, and you feel a sense of accomplishment about quitting.
- **After 3 months**: your sense of smell and taste improves, stamina and endurance increase, and your immune system improves.
- **After 1 year**: your risk of coronary disease is half of what it was.
- **After 5 years**: your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder decrease by half.
- **After 5-10 years**: your risk of stroke becomes the same as that of people who never smoked.