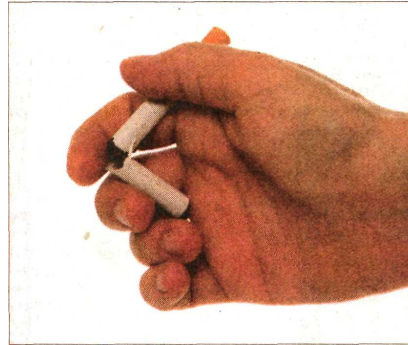


The after effects



The healing process just begins after a person has quit smoking; there is a long journey ahead

EFS

IT is a well-known fact that smoking is a habit that affects not only the smokers themselves, but also people around them. Thanks to countless public awareness campaigns, people have been enlightened about how smoking affects the body. However, what is not well known is how long it takes the body to recover, even after a person quits.

"It is a common mistake to think that a person recovers immediately after quitting," says Dr Mohan Bhate. "Nicotine causes a lot of strain to the heart and blood vessels and this damage is long lasting. It takes a long time for the heart to recover." It is not only the heart that suffers a long-time damage, but also the lungs and windpipe.

So how much time will it take for the body to recover completely? "The amount of time that a person has been smoking is the amount of time that the body requires to recover. A 10-year smoker's body cannot recover in a month," says Dr Bhate.

A smoker's blood pressure also starts going down after quitting the habit. Dr Bhate agrees, but feels that it is not that simple. "A high blood pressure indicates that the heart has to work harder to pump out blood. If a person has smoked regularly for a significant amount of time, it affects the heart. So after quitting, the blood pressure will certainly go down, but it will require a long time to become normal again," he says.