

Smoking and vaping use before surgery

Why should I stop smoking or vaping before surgery?

There are many reasons why it makes sense to stop smoking or vaping. Cigarettes and vaping devices are loaded with chemicals that can affect your body, and increase the risk of cancer, heart and lung disease, and diabetes. Here are some other reasons why it is important to quit prior to your surgery:

- **Smoking and anesthesia:** Anesthetic medications make the procedure less painful. Having a procedure puts your body under stress and affects your ability to fight infections. If you smoke, it is harder for your body to handle this stress.
- **Reduced oxygen supply:** The nicotine increases in your blood pressure and heart rate. Your heart works harder and requires more oxygen. When you smoke, you inhale carbon monoxide, which can cause you to need extra oxygen during a procedure to prevent damage to vital organs such as heart and brain. The situation becomes critical when you already have heart disease.
- **Blood clots:** Chemicals in cigarettes and vaping devices can lead to changes in your blood and make it thicker. Thick blood increases your risk of developing blood clots, which can be extremely dangerous in most cases.
- **Chest complications:** You could have chest-related problems due to smoking that can worsen after surgery. Cigarettes and vaping devices have chemicals that can destroy areas in your lungs, causing mucus to build up which clogs and can collapse different, smaller parts of your lungs. This leads to difficulty breathing and other problems.
- **Immune system issues:** Cigarettes and vaping devices effect your immune system, and your ability to fight infections. If you smoke or vape, you have a higher risk of infections, especially at the wound or incision site, after surgery.
- **Impaired healing:** Smoking affects your natural healing ability to heal by slowing down the healing of skin, bones and other body tissues. You will notice a considerable increase in recovery time if you do not stop smoking.
- **Medication doses:** You often take different medication after your surgery. Chemicals in cigarettes and vaping devices can cause you to need more anesthetic medications during your procedure and pain medication after your surgery.

How early should I stop smoking before going for surgery?

It is a good idea to stop smoking at least two weeks prior to your surgery. It is even better to stop at least six weeks before. Your immune system and lungs will take a couple of weeks to return to their normal function. Even if you do not quit in this time, you should stop as soon as possible. Quitting 12 hours before your surgery makes an impact.

Where can I find support to help me quit?

Talk to your doctor about medications, resources and tips that can help you quit. To get you started, here are a couple of sites to help you on your journey:

American Lung Association

Phone: 202-785-3355 or 800-548-8252

www.lung.org

SmokeFree

Phone: 800-784-8669

www.smokefree.gov

"Smoking Before Surgery: Is It OK?" Healthadvisor.org. 2014.

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