

STOP



BEFORE YOUR OPERATION

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Working together:
Swindon Borough Council &
Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Why you should stop smoking before surgery

If you are waiting for an operation then it's very important that you stop smoking as soon as possible. Smoking greatly increases the risk of complications during and after surgery.

Smokers are far more likely to have anaesthesia related complications and delay your recovery and wounds can be slower to heal.

Smoking increases the risk of anaesthesia complications.

If you smoke 10 cigarettes a day you have six times more risk of post-operative breathing problems. This risk increases the more you smoke per day and the period of time you have smoked. There are several reasons for this:

Smokers need more anaesthetic for all surgery as anaesthetic helps to reduce spasms and coughing during and after an operation. Because the tar in tobacco smoke constantly irritates the lungs, smokers need more anaesthetic to lessen these problems. Smokers have higher change of chest infections after surgery, as smoking destroys the little hairs or cilia that help to clean out your lungs. The mucus in

smokers' lungs is contaminated with tar and other poisons found in tobacco smoke. After an anaesthetic it is very important for you to clear mucus out of your lungs. The risk for smokers is much greater as the lungs cannot clean themselves. The poisons in tobacco smoke build up and cause a higher risk of chest infections.

- Smokers can spend longer in the recovery room and need extra oxygen.

All patients go to the recovery room after an operation until they are considered stable enough to return to the ward. Smokers need a lot more time in the recovery room before they stabilise. All smokers are at risk; even light smokers spend as long recovering as heavy smokers so cutting down is not an option. After anaesthetic the blood is unable to supply enough oxygen to the body and most patients are given extra oxygen in the recovery room. Carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke robs the blood of oxygen then smokers need more oxygen therapy and for longer. Some smokers need oxygen even after they leave the recovery room.

Smokers have slower wound healing.
Smokers have slower healing of wounds whether they are caused by surgery, injury or disease.

- Smokers have less oxygen to help healing.

Healing is helped by plenty of oxygen in the blood reaching the wound. Nicotine in tobacco smoke makes the blood vessels tighten and this reduces the amount of blood reaching the wound. The wound cannot heal as not only is there a reduced blood flow but also there is a lower level of oxygen in the blood.

- Nicotine causes other problems for healing.

Nicotine in tobacco smoke damages the production of red blood cells that carry essential healing chemicals to the scar tissue. Nicotine also makes blood platelets 'sticky'. Platelets are a type of blood cell needed for clotting. This can lead to lots of small blood clots at the site of the wound. This reduces the blood flow to the area and slows the healing process.

The sooner you stop before your operation, the better.

Stopping smoking at least 8 weeks before surgery reduces your risk of a range of complications. If you smoke, you have a one in three risk of post-operative breathing problems. This can be reduced to

one in ten if you stop 8 weeks before your operation.

Smoke free days can help as unfortunately, not everyone knows they are going to have surgery until they actually need it. Stopping 72 or 48 hours before an operation can decrease some of the risks. Carbon monoxide and nicotine are cleared from the body in a matter of days. This can help to improve your healing and recovery.

Can you smoke after an operation?

After surgery, it is important that you do not start smoking again, even if you only quit 12 hours before surgery. Allow your body time to recover and heal properly. Smoking makes recovery harder by:

- Stressing your heart
- Affecting your blood pressure
- Reducing oxygen in your blood and body tissues.

You can find more help here...

Swindon Stop Smoking Service:

Tel: 01793 465513 /

Mob: 07881 281797

Email: livewell@swindon.gov.uk

All sessions are free! One to One and Group sessions available.

**NHS Smoking Helpline
0300 123 1044**

Websites & Apps:

www.nhs.uk/smokefree

www.quit.org.uk/

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/apps/

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/quit-smoking/



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