

# Quit Tobacco For Your Surgery

## Tobacco and Surgery Risks

Tobacco products include cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS, includes e-cigarettes and JUUL®), smokeless tobacco (dip or chew), cigars, hookahs and pipes.

Using tobacco increases your risk of the following during and after surgery:

- heart problems
- lung problems (complications) such as pneumonia
- infections such as infections of your surgery site (incision)
- blood clots
- slower healing of your surgery site
- higher levels of pain and more problems with pain control.

Tobacco use keeps oxygen from reaching your surgery site and it can increase your recovery time.

## Benefits of Quitting

Tobacco products contain more than 7,000 chemicals. More than 70 are known to cause cancer.

- Research shows that quitting 4 weeks before surgery can reduce any problems after surgery up to 30 percent.
- People who quit smoking report having better pain control.

- Your body responds quickly to quitting:
  - **8 hours:** the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. The oxygen level in your blood increases to normal.
  - **48 hours:** Nerve endings start to grow again.
  - **2 weeks:** Your circulation improves and your lung function increases. (Source: World Health Organization)
- Using your surgery as a motivator to quit tobacco increases your success rate of quitting for good.

## When You Should Quit

Ideally, you should quit as soon as possible. Research shows that:

- the harmful effects from cigarettes begin to go down about 12 hours after your last cigarette smoked
- at least 8 weeks without cigarettes is the best way to reduce problems almost as low as people who do not smoke.

The American College of Surgeons recommends at least 4 weeks without cigarettes.

You should not use tobacco the day of surgery up to 1 week after your surgery. Your doctor may tell you when to quit before your surgery.

If you quit for surgery, you double the chance of staying off cigarettes for good. Many people report they have no cravings while in the hospital.

*(over)*

## Not Ready to Quit? Consider Taking a Break!

If quitting tobacco makes you feel nervous and seems overwhelming, consider taking a break or a vacation from tobacco use.

- You will get the physical benefits for the period of time that you are not using tobacco.
- You will reduce your risk of problems during surgery and still increase your chances of a smooth recovery after surgery.

If you can, set a goal to stop using tobacco for 1 month after your surgery. This will allow your body to heal the best after your surgery.

## Ways To Quit or Take a Break

- abrupt stop (cold turkey)
- nicotine replacement therapy\* (gum, lozenge, patch or inhaler)
- medicines (Chantix<sup>®</sup> and Zyban<sup>®</sup>)
- behavioral strategies (such as calling a friend or going for a walk)
- aromatherapy (black pepper oil)
- take a break (vacation) from tobacco.

Any step you take without tobacco is going to help you. Small steps are better than nothing!

**\*Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can nearly double your chances of successfully staying off cigarettes. It works best if you use it with the help of a doctor or counselor. Ask your doctor about using NRT around the time of surgery. Go to [quitforsurgery.com](http://quitforsurgery.com) to learn more.**

## Resources

### Allina Health

- Tobacco Intervention Program at Abbott Northwestern Hospital  
— 612-863-1648
- Tobacco Intervention Program at Mercy Hospital  
— 763-236-8008

- Tobacco Intervention Program at River Falls Area Hospital  
— 715-307-6075
- \*\*United Hospital Lung and Sleep Clinic Tobacco Cessation Program  
— 651-726-6200
- \*\*Penny George<sup>™</sup> Institute for Health and Healing (LiveWell Center) tobacco intervention coaching  
— 612-863-5178

## Other

- Quit Partner  
— 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or [quitpartnermn.com](http://quitpartnermn.com)
- Minnesota Department of Health  
— [health.state.mn.us/quit](http://health.state.mn.us/quit)
- online tobacco cessation support  
— [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov)
- American Lung Association/  
Tobacco Quit Line  
— 651-227-8014 or 1-800-586-4872
- Chantix<sup>®</sup> GetQuit Support plan  
— 1-877-CHANTIX (1-877-242-6849) or [get-quit.com](http://get-quit.com)
- financial aid for Chantix<sup>®</sup> or Nicotrol<sup>®</sup> inhaler  
— 1-866-706-2400 or [pfizerhelpfulanswers.com](http://pfizerhelpfulanswers.com)
- \*\*Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center's Residential Treatment Program  
— 1-800-344-5984 or 1-507-266-1930
- Plant Extracts aromatherapy  
— 1-877-999-4236

**\*\*There may be a cost to you.  
Check with your insurance provider.**