

The Impact of smoking on healing.

Another good reason to quit.

Smoking remains the number one cause of preventable death. Each year more than 400,000 people in the United States alone die from tobacco-related diseases. But what you may not realize is the negative impact smoking also has on the body's ability to heal. For example, non-smokers experience less pain and a higher degree of function after surgeries focusing on muscles, such as rotator cuff repairs, than smokers.



No matter how long or how much you've smoked, when you quit smoking you begin to experience benefits, and if you are preparing for surgery, quitting smoking before surgery can help improve post-operative wound healing and decrease recovery time.

Information provided by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS)

Further evidence continues to indicate smoking's harmful effects, not only to your lungs, but also to your bones and muscles:

- ✓ Rotator cuff tears in smokers are nearly twice as large as those in nonsmokers.
- ✓ Fractures take longer to heal in smokers because of the harmful effects of nicotine on the production of bone-forming cells.
- ✓ Smokers have a higher rate of complications after surgery than nonsmokers and outcomes are less satisfactory.
- ✓ Nicotine, the most powerful substance in tobacco, causes a decrease in blood flow to all tissues in the human body resulting in poor wound healing.
- ✓ Smoking increases your risk of developing osteoporosis - a risk factor in hip fractures.

The American Lung Association offers this advice to help you prepare to quit:

1. Identify your personal reasons for quitting.
2. Set a quit date, usually within 10 days to several weeks. If you smoke mostly at work, try quitting on a weekend. If you smoke mostly when relaxing or socializing, quit on a week day.
3. Identify your barriers to quitting (such as your spouse smokes or you've relapsed before due to depression or weight gain.)
4. Make SPECIFIC plans AHEAD OF TIME for dealing with temptations. Identify two or three coping strategies that work for you (such as taking a walk or calling a friend).
5. Get cooperation from family and friends. They can't quit for you but they can help by not smoking around you, providing a sympathetic ear and encouragement when you need it and leaving you alone when you need some space.

See "How do I quit?" on reverse side for a 4-step cessation plan.

OrthoIllinoisSM cares about your health.

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