

## Surgery and smoking

If you are having a planned operation you should stop smoking completely before your operation. However, stopping smoking after your surgery will also improve your recovery.

### How will smoking affect my surgery?

- **Wound healing:** Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood and narrows the blood vessels, slowing the rate of healing and increasing scarring.
- **Plastic surgery:** Nicotine can cause blood vessel constriction which reduces blood supply to the skin. By quitting smoking you will optimise the blood supply to the wound which is needed to keep soft tissue alive.

### What happens if I don't want to stop smoking?

If you don't want to stop permanently you should still stop before your surgery and during your recovery.

### What happens after I stop smoking?

- After 20 minutes your heart rate and blood pressure return to normal.
- After eight-24 hours your lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris.
- After 72 hours your breathing is easier and you have more energy. Your sense of smell and taste improve.
- After two-12 weeks your circulation improves and it becomes easier to walk and exercise.
- After three-nine months your lung function increases by up to 10%.
- After five years your risk of suffering a heart attack is cut by half.
- After 10 years your risk of getting lung cancer is half that of a smoker. Your risk of a heart attack is the same as someone who has never smoked.

Stopping smoking is one of the most important things you can do for your health. You are four times more likely to stop with the help of an NHS service (using stop smoking medication and support).

To be referred to your local stop smoking service or to speak to a specialist advisor please contact the Royal Free London stop smoking service on 020 7472 6393 or email [rf.stopsmoking@nhs.net](mailto:rf.stopsmoking@nhs.net).

Alternatively you can call the National Stop Smoking Service on 0300 123 1044.