

Smoking and Surgery

ADVICE FOR PATIENTS



Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do to improve your current and future health, especially before surgery.

Quitting smoking before surgery:

- Reduces the risk of serious complications.
- Improves healing time.
- Decreases the time you will be in hospital after the operation.
- Means you are less likely to be admitted to intensive care.

Developed by:

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action on smoking and health

 THE ROYAL COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS OF
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How long before surgery should I quit?

The sooner the better. Quitting smoking two months before surgery provides the most benefit.

You should not smoke for several weeks before surgery and certainly not on the day of your operation.

Smokers are 38% more likely to die after surgery than non-smokers.

Can I get help to quit?

Yes. You are four times more likely to quit successfully with the help of a free stop smoking service which can provide specialist support as well as medicines or Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT).

Find your local service at: <http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree/>

I don't think I will be able to quit, what should I do?

It is always best to quit tobacco completely and in one go.

However the most important thing is that you are smokefree, which isn't the same thing as being nicotine free. You can use NRT or electronic cigarettes to avoid smoking before and after surgery.

What should I expect from my doctors and nurses?

It is the job of your doctors and nurses to make sure you are well prepared for your surgery. In terms of smoking, this means you are:

- **Told about** the risks of smoking and benefits of quitting.
- **Referred** to a specialist stop smoking service.
- Provided with **stop smoking medicines** to help you quit.
- If you are unable to quit for good, you should be given **NRT**. This will help you remain smokefree before and after your surgery.

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