

Why You Should Stop Smoking

Reason 1: Smokers are at an increased risk for perioperative respiratory, cardiac and wound-related complications; quitting smoking may reduce the risk of complications.

- Abstinence from cigarettes decreases the incidence of wound infections and decreases the frequency of intraoperative myocardial ischemia in patients with coronary artery disease.
- Even brief preoperative abstinence (12 hours, “fasting” from smoking the night before surgery) may be helpful by reducing the levels of nicotine, carbon monoxide and other smoke constituents. The half-life of most of these compounds is such that levels are very low after this period of abstinence.
- Several weeks of abstinence may be necessary for maximum benefit, so the sooner that patients can quit, the better. However, shorter periods of preoperative abstinence do not increase the risk of pulmonary or other complications.

Reason 2: The perioperative period is a great time for smokers to quit for good.

- Surgery is a “teachable moment” to help smokers quit - undergoing a major surgical procedure will at least double the chances of successfully quitting.
- About 75 percent of smokers want to quit, and most have already made multiple attempts.
- Smokers will need to abstain while they are in the hospital, so the question is not whether they will quit, but for how long.
- The average smoker will add six to eight years to their life if they quit.
- Recent studies show that quitting smoking around the time of surgery does not increase stress levels and only rarely produces nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

For more information on available tools that will help you quit smoking before surgery and beyond, visit the ASA website at www.asahq.org/stopsmoking/provider.