Talk to your doctor and surgeon

Let your doctor (general practitioner) and surgeon know about your smoking and/or vaping.

Make sure the hospital or your surgeon knows all the medications you are taking when you are admitted to hospital.

Staying quit after surgery

After surgery, it is important that you try to stay quit, even if you only quit the day before surgery. Allow your body to recover and heal properly.

Smoking can slow down and interfere with the healing of bones, skin and other body tissues. Smoking narrows the tiny blood vessels in your skin, restricting blood flow and oxygen to wounds trying to heal. Infection is more likely.

In some types of surgery, skin at the site of the cut is more likely to die if you smoke.

Staying quit helps your recovery.



What support can help me to quit?

The best help to stop smoking is to use quitting medicines such as nicotine replacement therapy

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talk with Quitline (13 7848) for practical support that suits you.

Quitline counsellors can help build your motivation and skills to help you break free from smoking, vaping or using other nicotine products. Quitline is free and confidential.

Your doctor or pharmacist can also talk to you about which quitting medicines would suit you best.

If I want help quitting, I can:

Call: Quitline 13 7848

Request a free callback: quit.org.au/callback

Go to: quit.org.au/quitline for webchat, SMS, WhatsApp or Messenger

Talk to a health professional: my doctor, pharmacist or other health provider

Visit: quit.org.au for tips, tools and resources on quitting

Quitline 13 7848 | **quit.org.au**

Quit™

This information is for general use only: please consult your health professional for further advice.

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Stopping smoking for surgery

Quit™



Quitline 13 7848 | **quit.org.au**

Before surgery is a good time to quit

To get the best outcome from your surgery, stopping smoking is an important step to take.

Stopping smoking before surgery lowers your risk of serious problems and may mean:

faster recovery

less time in hospital

less need for antibiotics.

The chemicals in cigarettes affect how your body works and how well it copes during and after surgery.

Doctors strongly recommend stopping smoking before surgery.

The good news is, your body begins to repair itself as soon as you stop smoking. Your risk of complications from surgery is much lower, and you may have better surgery outcomes.

If you want to cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke to help you quit you can. But you have to quit completely to lower your risk of complications.

The earlier you quit, the greater your chances of a good recovery.



What are the risks from smoking?

If you continue to smoke right up to the time you have surgery, you will be more likely to:

- reduce the oxygen supply to your heart and body
- have difficulty breathing during and after surgery
- increase your risk of wound infection and lung complications
- slow down or harm the healing of bones, skin and wounds
- reduce how well some pain-relieving and other drugs work.

Every week you do not smoke before surgery will help your body cope better during surgery and help your recovery afterwards.

When you stop smoking

After 6 to 12 hours	Your heart rate is slower and your blood pressure may be more stable. Your heart is less stressed so it needs less oxygen to work properly.
By 24 hours	The level of carbon monoxide (CO) in your blood has dropped. Carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke replaces some of the oxygen in your blood. As CO drops, your blood can supply oxygen to your heart, muscles and skin more easily.
By 3 to 4 weeks	Your body is better at fighting wound infections, helping surgical cuts to heal.
By 4 to 6 weeks	You may be less likely to cough. This helps your breathing during surgery and reduces sharp pains from coughing for people with chest or abdominal (gut) surgery.
By 8 weeks	Your risk of lung and breathing complications will be lower than someone who keeps smoking. These risks include pneumonia and other problems which make it harder to breathe. Your immune system and your response to drugs used during surgery will also improve.

How well you recover may also depend on other things such as existing medical conditions.

If you have heart disease, where your supply of blood and oxygen is already reduced, then it is very important to stop smoking before surgery. This will help your body get the oxygen it needs.