

## Plastic Surgery Unit

# Risks associated with smoking in plastic surgery

## Information leaflet for patients who smoke and wish to undergo plastic surgery

### Introduction

Smoking is a well-established risk factor for delayed wound healing and postoperative complications with widespread effects to every organ in the body.

Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and increases the risk of breathing problems during and after an operation.

Wound healing and blood circulation problems are a particular cause for concern in plastic surgery. Nicotine produces peripheral vasoconstriction (narrowing of blood vessels) reducing blood supply to your wound.

If you continue to smoke your wound is most likely to be affected if you have the following surgery:

- Breast surgery
- Flaps/grafts
- Abdominal surgery
- Re-implantation procedures i.e. fingers severed following trauma.

We recommend that you give up smoking at least eight weeks before your operation; this should reduce your risk of complications to that of a non-smoker.



## Patient Information

Evidence suggests that nicotine replacement therapies such as patches or vapes are also detrimental to wound healing and therefore not recommended. If it proves difficult to stop, cravings can be alleviated with limited use of short-term nicotine replacement therapy such as gum or lozenges which can be obtained without a prescription.

If you choose not to give up smoking your consultant may cancel your operation even on the day of surgery due to the high risk of complications.

Download the free NHS Smokefree app to help you quit smoking.

**Good luck giving up.**

## Further Information

If you have any questions about the service or your treatment, please contact

### Plastic Surgery dressing clinic

Telephone: 02476 966474

Email: [PDC@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:PDC@uhcw.nhs.uk)

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5225 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

#### Document History

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