

Plastic Surgery Unit

Risks of smoking before plastic surgery

Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood. Smoking also increases the risk of breathing problems during and after surgery. Smoking is also a risk factor for delayed wound healing and post-operative complications.

Wound healing and blood circulation problems are a major concern in plastic surgery. If you continue to smoke, your wound is most likely to be affected if you have:

- breast surgery
- flaps/grafts
- abdominal surgery
- re-implantation procedures, such as for fingers severed after trauma.

Give up smoking at least 8 weeks before surgery. This should reduce your risk of complications.

Nicotine narrows your blood vessels (peripheral vasoconstriction). This reduces the blood supply to your wound.

Nicotine replacement therapies are not recommended. Nicotine replacement therapies such as patches or vapes can also delay wound healing.



Patient Information

If you have found it difficult to stop, you can ease cravings by:

- using short-term nicotine replacement therapy - you can get this without a prescription.

If you choose not to give up smoking, your consultant may cancel your surgery. This is because of a high risk of complications.

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

More information

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

Plastic Surgery Dressing Clinic - 024 7696 6474

Email: 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.

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Document History

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