



# LUNG CANCER CANADA

AWARENESS. SUPPORT. EDUCATION.

## How to Prepare for Lung Cancer Surgery when You Smoke

By Dr. John Oyston, MB BS, FFARCS, FRCP(C)  
Staff Anesthesiologist, The Scarborough Hospital

Most doctors prefer that their patients stop smoking several weeks before surgery. This can be an especially difficult time to quit for lung cancer patients, who are often under a tremendous amount of stress as a result of their diagnosis. However, knowing the benefits of smoking cessation and how to quit can help ease anxieties and optimize one's prospects of healing and recovery.

### Why should you stop smoking before surgery?

**Smoking damages your lungs:** This puts you at increased risk of having breathing problems after your anesthetic. The results may range from needing drugs to reduce wheezing, to being on a breathing machine in Intensive Care. Quitting smoking a few weeks prior to surgery allows your lungs to start healing and reduce this risk.

**Smoking puts your heart at risk:** Cigarette smoke contains poisons that put your heart at risk. Inhaling carbon monoxide, which is present in every cigarette, reduces the amount of oxygen that blood can carry to your heart and vital organs; nicotine makes your heart beat harder and faster – together they can put you at risk of a heart attack. Stopping smoking for even a few hours allows your body to get rid of these poisons.

**Smoking after surgery makes it harder for your body to heal and increases risk of infections:** A decrease in the

### Tips:

- It may be easier to quit smoking when you are having surgery because you are away from normal routines. While you are in hospital you can get help to quit smoking from medical professionals, and the risk of withdrawal symptoms is less if you quit while in hospital.
- Medical staff at the hospital are there to help you quit. Also, the hospital is a non-smoking area, so you will not be able to smoke while in hospital.
- If you have more than four weeks to prepare for surgery, choose a "Quit Day" at least four weeks before surgery, and stop smoking on that day.

**Remember there are many resources available which offer help and advice to people who want to stop smoking. Patients can usually access this information and services through the hospital for which they are receiving care.**

For more information, please visit [www.stopsmokingforsafersurgery.ca](http://www.stopsmokingforsafersurgery.ca) or phone the Smokers' Helpline toll-free at 1-877-513-5333.

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