Smoking Cessation for Safer Surgery
Tips for helping patients quit

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Harmonization Project
Stop Smoking Before Surgery

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For more information: http://harmonization.ok.ubc.ca/
Getting ready for elective surgery

• Blood work
• X-Rays and/or other tests
• Check for allergies
• Arranging travel
• Pre-op teaching
  • What will happen during surgery
  • Pre-surgery fasting (no fluids/food)
Getting ready for surgery .....  

Window of opportunity for talking about quitting
GOAL: Best possible surgical outcomes

- Faster recovery
- Fewer complications
- Faster wound healing
- Shorter stay in hospital
Smokers who have surgery are at higher risk of breathing problems and chest infections.

What’s the evidence?
Smoking interferes with blood flow

- Nicotine constricts blood vessels – reducing blood flow to tissues
- Carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke reduces the ability of blood cells to carry oxygen to tissues
- Chemicals in cigarette smoke make blood thicker, stickier and more likely to result in clots.

Poor healing, complications
Smoking changes our immune system -> higher risk for wound infections after surgery
Patient Awareness of Smoking-Related Surgical Complications in Northern BC

- Slower Healing of Wounds after Surgery: 40% unlikely, 60% likely
- Increased Risk of Infection after Surgery: 47% unlikely, 53% likely
- Increased Complications with Anesthetic after Surgery: 46% unlikely, 54% likely
- Increased risk of heart attack or lung problems after Surgery: 14% unlikely, 86% likely
Patients get this.....

“The idea of having a faster healing time and less risk of infection and everything was pretty compelling for sure, so that’s what made me want to quit.”

-Female, Smoking for 13 years

“I thought that it looked like it was actually a pretty good idea to quit smoking before surgery. That it will be easier on your lungs when they have to put you to sleep.”

-Female, Smoking for 39 years
Surgery provides an incentive and timeline to quit!
RECOMMENDATION:
Stop smoking 6-8 weeks before surgery
(and stay smoke-free for recovery)
Our Strategy

- Raise awareness of benefits of stopping smoking for surgery
  - Patients and family members
  - Health care professionals (HCP)
- Increase access to resources to support quitting for surgery
- Enable all HCPs who see patients to provide support for quitting for a safer surgery and speedy recovery
Rack Card and other clinic resources

Quit before surgery and cash in on these benefits...

Your surgical wounds will heal faster.
Your lungs and wounds are less likely to become infected.
Your stay in the hospital will be shorter.

Tried to quit before?
Stopping before surgery will increase your chances of quitting for good.

Get in shape for surgery.
For information about your options and tips for quitting visit: www.quitnow.ca
For Free Nicotine Patches or Gum Call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1
Check with your pharmacist about coverage for medications to help you quit.

Headed into hospital for surgery?
There’s never been a better time to kick tobacco.
Raising Awareness

On TV screens in hospitals and clinics

Stop Smoking Before Surgery
Did you know that if you stop smoking before surgery, you will:

- Heal faster
- Face fewer complications
- Improve your breathing
- Reduce your risk of infection
- Improve blood flow to your heart and other areas of the body
- Reduce stress on your heart
- Speed up bone fusion (healing) time
- Shorten your hospital stay

Ask your health care professional today about how you can quit. Visit QuitNow.ca

HealthLinkBC

northern health
BC Cancer Agency
CARE + RESEARCH
Canadian Cancer Society
harmonization
Raising Awareness

- Patient education video (2015)
Increasing Access to Resources

Stop Smoking Before Surgery

Get in shape and butt out before your surgery!

If you use tobacco and will be facing surgery in the next 6 - 8 weeks, your best chance at a speedy recovery depends on you quitting smoking.

If you quit now, you will:

- Heal faster
- Face fewer complications
- Improve your breathing
- Reduce your risk of infection
- Improve blood flow to your heart and other areas of the body
- Reduce stress on your heart
- Speed up bone fusion (healing) time
- Shorten your hospital stay

Turn your back on tobacco!

Quitting before surgery could increase your chances of quitting for good.
## QuitNow resources

### Patient Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop Smoking Before Surgery FAQ</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Link" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Step at a Time - For Smokers Who Want to Quit [PDF] - 2773KB</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Link" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Step at a Time - For Smokers Who Don’t Want to Quit [PDF] - 1131KB</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Link" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Step at a Time - Help a Smoker Quit [PDF] - 1039KB</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Link" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butt Out Before Surgery! [PDF] - 1006KB</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Link" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharge Brochure - Staying Smokefree for Recovery [PDF] - 1893KB</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Link" /></td>
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</tbody>
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.Scorecard [View](#) [Next](#)

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"I see patients recover from surgery faster when they are smoke-free. They say it’s not easy to stop — but worth it."

Ryan Olmschat, RN, Northern Health.
More resources for stopping smoking before surgery....

for patients and

for health care providers
Stop Smoking Before Surgery

Studies have shown conclusively that patients who stop smoking before surgery have fewer complications and heal faster than those who continue to smoke.

A number of studies examining the effects of quitting before surgery have been done, and all of them have found that smokers who quit before surgery face better outcomes.

- **Smoking and surgical complications**
  - 2012 systematic review concludes smokers who quit before surgery have fewer complications

- **Smoking and wound healing**
  - 2012 systematic review concludes smoking delays healing in surgical patients

- **Smoking cessation before surgery**
  - 2012 systematic review demonstrates cessation interventions are effective for surgical patients

- **Smoking and surgical outcomes**
  - 2011 study finds increased mortality among surgical patients who smoke

- **Surgery as a teachable moment**
  - 2010 study finds surgical patients are willing to quit

- **Fears of quitting immediately before surgery unfounded**
  - 2011 study demonstrates that quitting shortly before surgery is safe
Enabling HCPs in NH to Support Cessation Using standard questions

**Smoking Status:**
- Have you used any tobacco products in the last 6 months? Yes/No
- Have you used any tobacco products in the last 7 days? Yes/No

**Questions for Elective Surgery Patients:**
- Are you aware that stopping smoking before surgery lowers the risk of surgical complications and improves healing? Yes/No
- Have you been referred to QuitNow and HealthLink BC 811 for provincial smoking cessation services? Yes/No
Brief Intervention With Patients Preparing for Surgery: Demo

• Ask Have you used any tobacco products in the last 6 mos?
• Advise I encourage you to quit smoking for surgery because ......
• Assess Are you interested in some resources to help you quit?
• Assist Link patients to resources [Nunavut Quitline services and local supports – e.g., visit health centres for free NRT]
• Arrange Arrange follow up [e.g., Nunavut QuitLine]
Enabling HCPs to Support Cessation
Lanyard Tags and Stress Balls

I ask about tobacco!
I promote a smoke-free recovery.

Stop smoking for surgery.

The 5A’s

- Ask: about tobacco
- Advise: tobacco users to quit
- Assess: commitment to change
- Assist: link to quitnow and HealthLink BC 8-1-1
- Arrange: follow up with quitnow services

quitnow.ca
HealthLink BC 8-1-1

Stop smoking before surgery.
Stay smoke-free for recovery.

t northern health
10-425-6048 (NHD06/13)
Enabling HCPs to Support Cessation Discharge Brochure

• **Included:**
  ✔ Benefits of staying smoke free for recovery
  ✔ How to link to B.C. Smoking Cessation Program
  ✔ How to link to QuitNow for follow-up services
  ✔ Management of cravings, etc.
Stop Smoking before Surgery
What we learned....

• Patients who were provided stop smoking before surgery advice/information were more likely to:
  • know about benefits of quitting for surgery
  • reduce/quit before surgery

• Our strategies were helpful in increasing awareness and reinforcing messages received from health professionals regarding stopping smoking for surgery.
Recommendations for the future

• **Focus on benefits:** stopping smoking = better surgical outcomes

• **Expand outreach:** the more the message is out there in the community the better

• **Ensure all patients know** the benefits of stopping & receive advice/support in throughout the surgical trajectory.
Common questions:

A patient is scheduled for surgery in 2 weeks – is it still important to quit before surgery?

- Yes for sure – there are benefits anytime!

Patients are stressed before having surgery – is it really the best time to quit?

- Stopping smoking can reduce stress. Patients feel better if they know they have reduced the risks of surgery by stopping smoking and increased their chances of a speedy recovery.

As patients get over surgery and back to regular activities, they will want a smoke. Why do they need to stay smoke-free after surgery?

- Staying smoke free speeds up healing and reduces infection because blood circulates better and more oxygen reaches the surgical site.
Summary: Stop smoking 6-8 weeks before surgery makes sense...

- Faster recovery
- Fewer complications
- Faster wound healing
- Shorter stay in hospital
**Get home sooner

Safer Surgery and Better Recovery
Everyone can be involved...

- **Ask** about smoking status
- **Talk up** the benefits of stopping smoking before surgery
- **Link up** with Nunavut QuitLine and local resources
- **Use the 4 A’s** to provide smoking cessation support

Help get patients in shape for surgery
Thank you

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Twitter: @JoanBottorff
www.harmonization.ok.ubc.ca

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References and Resources:

• STOP SMOKING BEFORE SURGERY Resources http://harmonization.ok.ubc.ca/program-information/
• VIDEO: GETTING READY FOR SURGERY – INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS WHO SMOKE http://harmonization.ok.ubc.ca/news-events/#post-888

Find other resources: www.harmonization.ok.ubc.ca and http://www.nuquits.gov.nu.ca/ OR email tobacco@gov.nu.ca to find out what is happening in your community