



Smoking and Anesthesia

In addition to the many health problems associated with smoking, it can also increase the risks of anesthesia-related problems. Accordingly, anesthesia professionals recommend you quit smoking as soon as possible—ideally at least a week—before your procedure, and as long as possible afterward.

Smokers are more likely to have issues with breathing during and after surgery, and they are more likely to need a ventilator. Because smoking also reduces blood flow, the likelihood of infection at the incision increases as well. While more than 50 percent of smokers experience complications from surgery, that number drops to less than 20 percent for those who quit, even shortly before surgery.

Your anesthesiologist or certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) manage your pain control and closely monitor your vital bodily functions during surgery. They see first-hand the effects of smoking on the body, and particularly on the heart and lungs. Their experience leads them to strongly recommend quitting—not only for surgery, but also for good.

In your pre-operative consultation, your anesthesiologist or CRNA will answer your questions about the surgery and anesthesia. S/he will also ask detailed questions about your health and the medications you take. Be sure to say if you have ever smoked, regardless of how long ago you may have quit. This will allow your anesthesia provider to take precautions to decrease potential problems related to smoking, and will work closely with you to ensure the best, safest care.

The American Cancer Society has collected many resources to help people stop smoking:

- Find out the [cost of smoking by state](#)
- [When Smokers Quit](#)
- [Facts About Secondhand Smoke](#)
- [Join the Great American Smokeout](#): Annually on the third Thursday in November. But you can do it any day!
- [Cigarette Calculator](#) - How many cigarettes are you smoking over time?
- Also see [TobaccoFree.org](#)
- [Kicking Smoking Resources](#)
- American Heart Association: [Tips for Friends and Family of Quitters](#)