



HEALTH EFFECTS OF SMOKING

Health studies have shown that smoking can affect your heart as well as your lungs. Smoking also raises your risk of certain cancers. These are all good reasons to quit.

When you smoke, your breathing becomes shallow and your lungs fill with smoke. Smoking cigarettes also fills your body with chemicals, such as nicotine and tar. Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide. This gas takes the place of oxygen in your blood. Nicotine raises your blood pressure and heart rate. It reduces blood flow (circulation) to your arms and legs, and slows digestion. Without good circulation, you will have slowed healing; especially crucial healing required after surgery.

Smoking has been linked with many serious illnesses. Smokers are a high-risk group under any circumstances, but particularly so during and after surgery. In the surgical candidate, smoking can:

- **Reduce blood flow, which can slow healing**
- **Create blood clots,**
- **Create wounds that break open and**
- **Greater risk of infection**
- **Perhaps the most serious threat to smokers who have foot and ankle surgery, however, is NON-UNION or failure of the bone to mend. Smokers are four times more likely to experience non-union than non-smokers.**

Quitting: If you're concerned that cigarettes are putting your feet — and other body parts — at risk, here are a few steps that may help you finally quit smoking.

- **Start planning ahead to help prepare yourself for quitting.** Set a date for when you will quit, and beforehand remove cigarettes and ashtrays from your home, car, and other surroundings. Ask your friends and family for encouragement and support.
 - **Talk to your doctor.** Several medications — including different types of nicotine products, such as nasal spray, lozenges, and patches — can double your chances of quitting. Some antidepressant medications can also help with cravings for nicotine.
 - **Avoid triggers.** Being around other people who are smoking can make you want to smoke. In addition, drinking alcohol makes you more likely to smoke. If you frequent bars and other places where alcohol and smoking tend to come together, now's a good time to find a new hangout.