

Smoking, weight loss surgery and YOU!

If you smoke, your bariatric surgeon will require you to stop smoking at least 8 weeks before your surgery. This is because patients who smoke are at a higher risk of having surgical complications, anesthesia complications, and are more likely to develop pneumonia after surgery. Smoking also contradicts the purpose of weight loss surgery, which is about improving your overall health and quality of life.

We understand there a number of reasons why it is difficult to stop smoking. Nicotine is the drug in tobacco products that causes dependence. Patients who smoke, even in moderation, are dependent on nicotine. Nicotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States. There are many health risks associated with smoking. Bariatric patients who have smoked for a long period of time fear gaining extra pounds once they quit smoking. We also understand this is a time of stress because you are busy preparing for your upcoming surgery and anticipating the lifelong changes that follow. Regardless, we understand the effort involved but believe the risks of smoking are great and the benefits of smoking cessation far outweigh these inconveniences.

We want to help you reach your goals. So, here are some tips:

First let's talk about why patients gain weight after they quit smoking:

1) Changes in the metabolic rate

Nicotine raises the metabolic rate, this temporarily slows after smoking cessation. Your body will burn off fewer calories, which causes the tendency to gain weight in some patients.

2) Changes in eating habits

Patients are more inclined to eat sweet or fatty foods or eat more because food simply tastes better as taste buds reactivate.

3) Oral cravings

Many patients who have recently stopped smoking report that they miss the feeling of having something in their mouth. This could lead to snacking or mindless eating.

Take advantage of the 8 weeks before surgery to make adjustments to your eating and exercise habits.

- **Discuss options for weight management with your dietician**
- **Discuss STOP SMOKING behavioral counseling with your counselor**
- **Discuss pharmaceutical options with your doctor**
- **Get active!**

We encourage you to access, download and review the American Cancer Society *Guide to Quitting Smoking* and *Quit Smoking Tips* by googling:

- ACS Guide to Quitting Smoking
- ACS Quit Smoking Tips

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