

Lamb Plastic Surgery Center Stance on Smoking/Tobacco Use and Surgical Procedures

Smoking has been linked to delayed healing after surgery, due to decreased blood flow to tissues.

The type of tissue most affected will be tissue under stress (i.e. surgical site tissue). This can delay healing timelines or result in tissue necrosis.

The National Institute of Health recommends quitting smoking/tobacco products at least 6 weeks prior to and after elective surgical procedures.

The pulmonary risks of surgery are also increased in smokers/tobacco users. To decrease pulmonary risks, quitting use prior to elective surgery would also be of increased benefit. The longer amount of time between quitting and surgery, the better (6 weeks – 6 months).

Surgeons and hospitals in the U.S. have varying strategies/approaches to performing surgery on smokers/tobacco users:

- 1) Verbal warning of risks to include delayed healing, loss of tissue, tissue necrosis – leading to infection, increase in surgical revisions/touch-up operations, or loss of nipple/breast tissue, among other risks.
- 2) Full cessation (quitting) of smoking for agreed upon number of weeks prior to surgery with blood tests to confirm compliance, resulting in canceling surgical case for those who are non-compliant.

Lamb Plastic Surgery Center, Donald R. Lamb, M.D., will perform surgery on current smokers. Please be advised that frequency and severity of surgical complications are increased in smokers/tobacco users. Careful operative technique selection by the surgeon can help minimize some complications (i.e. nipple grafting, etc.).

There are NO risk-free operations.

Smokers/tobacco users must acknowledge their increased risk for surgical complications and have shared responsibility in regard to their surgical outcome.

For free information and resources on smoking cessation, please visit:

<https://ndquits.health.nd.gov/>

Or call:

1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)