The sooner you stop before your op, the better
Stopping smoking at least 8 weeks before surgery reduces your risk of a range of complications. If you smoke, you have a 1 in 3 risk of post-operative breathing problems. This can be reduced to 1 in 10 if you stop 8 weeks before your op.

Smoke-free days can help
Unfortunately, not everyone knows they are going to have surgery until they actually need it. Stopping 72 or 48 hours before an operation can decrease some of the risks. Carbon monoxide and nicotine are cleared from the body in a matter of days. This can help to improve healing and recovery.

For friendly support and advice, just call:

01493 452067 or 0800 652 3477
to speak to your local Stop Smoking Service team

Patient Liaison, Complaints and Compliments

By Telephone 01502 718666

Geraldine Adams, Patient Liaison Manager
East Coast Community Healthcare
Beccles House
1 Common Lane North
Beccles
Suffolk NR34 9BN

By Email ECCH.patientliaison@nhs.net

If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio cassette, Braille or in a different language please contact Andrea Dawson on 01502 718600

If you are waiting for an operation then it is very important that you stop smoking as soon as possible. Smoking greatly increases the risk of complications during and after surgery. Some operations are not even an option for smokers.

- Smokers are far more likely to have anaesthesia-related complications.
- Smoking can delay your recovery and the wounds are slower to heal.
Smoking increases the risk of anaesthesia complications

If you smoke 10 cigarettes a day you have 6 times more risk of post-operative breathing problems. This risk increases the more you smoke and the longer you have smoked. There are several reasons for this:

- **Smokers need more anaesthesia for all surgery**
  Anaesthesia helps to reduce spasms and coughing during and after an operation. But because the tar in tobacco smoke constantly irritates the lungs, smokers need more anaesthesia to lessen these problems. This gives a higher risk of anaesthesia-related complications.

- **Smokers have a higher chance of chest infections after surgery**
  Smoking destroys the little hairs or cilia that help to clean out your lungs. The mucus in smokers’ lungs is contaminated with tar and other poisons in tobacco smoke. After anaesthesia it is very important for all patients to clear mucus out of the lungs. Even non-smokers are at risk of post-op pneumonia if the lungs don’t clear the mucus. But the risk for smokers is much greater as the lungs cannot clean themselves. The poisons in tobacco smoke build up and cause a higher risk of chest infections.

- **Smokers spend longer in the recovery room and need extra oxygen**
  All patients go to the recovery room after an operation until they are considered stable enough to return to the ward. But smokers need a lot more time in the recovery room before they stabilise. Light smokers spend as long recovering as heavy smokers so cutting down is not an option. After anaesthesia the blood is unable to supply enough oxygen to the body and most patients are given extra oxygen in the recovery room. Because the carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke robs the blood of oxygen then smokers need more oxygen even after they leave the recovery room.

Smokers have slower wound healing

Smokers have slower healing of wounds whether they are caused by surgery, injury or disease.