



The Effect of Smoking on the Healing Process

Are you a smoker who recently underwent surgical repair? Is your wound taking longer to heal than you assumed? Smoking is detrimental to the healing process.

Here's why:

- Nicotine affects the ability of the bone to heal itself
 - Bone creating cells called osteoblasts do not function as well in smokers causing the bone to take much longer to heal
- Smoking decreases blood circulation due to deteriorating blood vessels which carry necessary nutrients to help heal the wound
 - Nicotine causes the blood vessels to narrow and decreases the function of the red blood cells which decreases the rate of healing
- These factors cause prolonged healing processes and increased chance of infection compared to non-smokers
 - Infection-fighting white blood cells do not function well either so the chance of infection is higher in smokers than non-smokers

Source: <http://www.virginia.edu/uwaprint/HSC/pdf/05021.pdf>

