

## Smoking and Your Brain and Spine

Smoking has been shown to have many negative effects on your body. Nicotine and other byproducts of tobacco decrease blood flow to all parts of the body. Good blood flow is important because it brings oxygen and other nutrients to your body, which helps you heal.

Smoking is a major cause of disc disease and other spine issues. **Nicotine is found in cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, tobacco pouches, nicotine patches, vapes, and other products.**

### How smoking affects your surgery:

A surgical incision has trouble healing if blood flow is decreased. Smoking lowers the amount of oxygen and nutrients your body needs to heal. Nicotine and other chemicals can stop the spine from healing properly after a fusion surgery. If a spinal fusion does not heal the way it should, the fusion can fail, which may lead to ongoing pain and more surgeries. There is so much data that shows the relationship between nicotine use and poor surgical outcomes that some insurance companies won't approve spine surgery unless the patient quits using nicotine.

### What can you do?

*Quitting smoking, as well as all tobacco-related products, is one of the most important things you can do to make your surgery successful and improve your overall health.* There are many resources to help with quitting. If you feel you need assistance, contact your primary care provider or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.