



Lower Back Pain and Smoking

The dangers of smoking seem to be linked to the development of pain in the bones and joints of the lower back. The development of lower back pain and lumbar degenerative disc disease has been significantly correlated with a previous history of smoking. Correlation has been found between smoking, hypertension and elevated LDL cholesterol.

The study was performed on over 1,300 patients over an extended number of years. Study results report that problems in the lower back can be caused by arteriosclerotic occlusion of the blood vessels in that area.

Since the study was prospective, it shows that the cause occurred before the effect, rather than the other way around.

It has been known for many years among orthopaedic surgeons who do spinal surgery that smoking can significantly alter healing following lumbar spinal fusion surgery.

The correlation between slow bone healing of fractures and bone grafts is so compelling that many orthopaedic surgeons who do spinal surgery have decided that they would no longer do spinal fusion surgery on patients who continue to smoke. It does seem to identify those patients who are serious about stopping smoking and benefitting their health in that way in addition to giving greater advantage to the bone graft healing when they undergo surgery.

The situation is different, however, for patients who sustain fractures and who are smokers. These patients are almost surely going to have delayed healing of their fracture if they continue to smoke. The problem has been that the time after a fracture is a difficult time to convince a smoker to stop smoking. The person realizes that they should do that for the good of their fracture. but it is a time of stress that makes it difficult for them to stop smoking.



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Please consult Dr. Haverbush or a physician for specific treatment recommendations.

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