



## **SMOKING AND THE SKIN**

Much is known about the harmful effects of smoking on the body, such as cancer, lung disease, and heart disease, but many are not aware of the direct effects it has on the skin.

### **Premature Aging**

Smoking has been directly linked to earlier signs of aging in the skin, most prominently in the face. Deeper lines or “wrinkles” appear earlier than normal, especially “crow’s feet” around the eyes and vertical lines around the mouth. Smoking also affects the texture and tone of the skin (skin becomes dull, loses elasticity, and often has a grayish discoloration), and can cause more severe wrinkles on non-facial areas, such as the neck, chest, and inner arms.

### **Impaired Wound Healing**

Smoking is known to slow down wound healing and contribute to the development and persistence of leg ulcers, including diabetic foot ulcers. If you smoke and must have a skin cancer surgically removed, the wound is less likely to heal well, especially if a special repair such as a flap or graft is needed. Additionally, the risk of wound infection is higher in smokers.

### **Skin Cancer**

Smoking doubles the risk of developing Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the skin and lips.

### **Other Skin Diseases**

Smoking has been linked to a higher risk of Psoriasis and a type of Lupus of the skin, as well as other skin conditions.

### **Help to Quit Smoking**

There are numerous methods and aids to help in quitting smoking, including support groups, nicotine replacement products, prescription medication, as well as even “alternative methods”. No one method works for everyone. Ask your primary doctor or to learn more, visit the following websites:

<http://www.webmd.com/smoking-cessation/default.htm>

<http://mayoclinic.com/health/smoking-cessation/SK00055>

<http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GuidetoQuittingSmoking>