



### **Information for Patients Who Smoke or are Exposed to Secondary Smoke**

#### **General Information**

- All procedures in plastic surgery are performed to improve form and, in some cases, function. Our goal as plastic surgeons is to have the best result possible. Unfortunately, smoking and secondary smoke can affect wound healing in a potentially devastating way. Smoking causes constriction (narrowing) of small blood vessels in the skin which may have a direct negative effect on your upcoming surgery. In any operation that involves undermining of the skin, survival of the skin depends on blood flow through those small blood vessels. Any exposure to smoke either directly or indirectly can result in poor wound healing, blistering of the skin, skin loss necessitating skin grafting, increased risk in wound infection and loss of skin and deeper tissues, all resulting from decreased blood supply to those areas.
- Slow wound healing (months instead of weeks), skin loss (resulting in scabbing and prolonged need for dressing changes) and infection (usually need for antibiotics but sometimes another surgery to drain the infection) are all complications that can occur if you smoke or are exposed to smoke. The risk, instead of less than 5%, can be as high as 100%. Please be honest with us so we can take good care of you and help prevent problems.
- As your physician, if you are smoking or in contact with secondary smoke within one month of surgery requiring skin flaps (facelift, forehead lift, abdominoplasty, breast reduction, mastopexy, TRAM flap) your surgery will be cancelled and not reschedule for one month. We wait one week for liposuction, augmentation mammoplasty and blepharoplasty and one month for rhinoplasty.
- If a problem occurs after surgery, your surgeon and the practice team will assist you in resolving the problem to the best of our ability. It is imperative that you are candid with us about his matter. We cannot care for you properly if we do not have the correct medical information.
- **Treatment of the above complications may result in an extra cost to you**

**Facelift:** There can be actual skin loss of the face in front of and behind the ear.

**Brow Lift:** There can be hair loss, poor wound healing and scarring.

**Abdominoplasty:** Smoking or exposure to smoke will decrease the ability of the skin to heal properly and may result in scarring, infection and possible skin loss.

**Breast Reduction or Breast Lift:** There can be delayed wound healing resulting in unsightly scarring and skin loss and potential nipple loss necessitating skin graft. In all cases of patients smoking or exposed indirectly to smoke, wounds do not heal in a normal length of time. Wound healing can be prolonged by as much as 3-4 months.

**TRAM/DIEP Flap:** There can loss of skin from the mastectomy and the abdominal closure necessitating skin grafting and excessive scarring. Actual loss of a part of the TRAM flap or the whole TRAM flap may occur. Delayed wound healing may delay your postoperative cancer treatments.