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Mayo Clinic: E-Cigarettes Mitigate Risks Of Smoking Before And After Operations



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E-Cigarettes slashed smokers' tobacco use both before and after elective surgery, according to a study from the Mayo clinic.

Regular cigarette smoking can often cause post-operative complications in smokers, and health professionals have long argued that "quitting or cutting down" smoking close to the time of operation can lessen these risks.

In hopes of achieving this, researchers examined adult smokers that were scheduled for operations at the Mayo Clinic Rochester, one of the nation's leading medical practices and research groups, (<http://ntr.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/01/31/ntr.ntw003.abstract>) between December 2014 and June 2015.

In the two weeks before and after surgery, patients were asked to use e-cigarettes to get their nicotine hit instead of regular smokes. All the patients had their use of e-cigarettes recorded on a daily basis and were quizzed about their smoking behavior at 14 and 30 days.

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Of the 75 patients who took part in the study, 87 percent tried an e-cigarette over the trial period. After 30 days, a little more than half — 51 percent — said they would continue vaping.

The average number of cigarettes consumed fell sharply from 15.6 per person to 7.6 — a 51.3 percent decrease. “ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Device) use is feasible in adult smokers scheduled for elective surgery and is associated with a reduction in perioperative cigarette consumption.”

“These results support further exploration of ENDS as a means to help surgical patients reduce or eliminate their cigarette consumption around the time of surgery,” the study said.

“These pilot data suggest that ENDS use is feasible and well-accepted in surgical patients, and worthy of exploration as a harm reduction strategy in these patients. The major finding of this feasibility study was that when cigarette smokers scheduled for elective surgery were offered free ENDS at the time of pre-anesthesia evaluation, a high proportion utilized them in the perioperative period, with an associated reduction in cigarette consumption.”

The study will add weight to the arguments made by some public health professionals that e-cigarettes, while not 100 percent safe, can serve as a critical tool to reduce the harms and hazards associated with regular smoking, particularly after Public Health England’s report concluded e-cigarettes are 95 percent safer than regular cigarettes. **(RELATED: Study: E-Cigarettes Are 95% Safer Than Tobacco) (<http://dailycaller.com/2015/08/19/study-e-cigarettes-are-95-safer-than-tobacco/>)**

The study’s authors caution more work needs to be done in the field, adding “to our knowledge, there are no prior comparable studies reporting uptake of ENDS when their use is encouraged by healthcare professionals in a medical population.”

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