Smoking affects fracture healing

March 22 2013

In a new study presented today at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), researchers reviewed existing literature on smoking and the healing of fractures involving long bones (bones that are longer than they are wide).

The analysis of data from 20 studies found an overall 2.3 times higher risk of nonunion (bones that do not heal properly) in smokers. Similarly, for all fractures, the average time to fracture healing was longer for smokers (32 weeks) than nonsmokers (25.1 weeks).

The review illustrates the effects of smoking on acute fractures, primarily that smoking increases the risk of the fracture not fully healing (nonunion) and infection. Smoking presents significant risks to the fracture patient, according to the study authors, which need to be discussed with patients at the time of injury and when considering surgery.

Provided by American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons