

## River Cities Interventional Pain Specialists

Since 2004 Dr. Randall P. Brewer has been in clinical private practice in Shreveport, Louisiana and maintains academic appointments at Duke University and Louisiana State University, where he routinely lectures in the areas of Pain Medicine and clinical Neuroscience in the Department of Neurology and the Medical school. He is board certified by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Board of Pain Medicine, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Brewer and his multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled nurses and physician extenders provide comprehensive pain management treatment solutions to treat chronic pain disorders. The team works collaboratively with patients and area providers to develop individualized treatment plans and attainable goals. . These strategies help patients to effectively address a wide range of chronic pain disorders.

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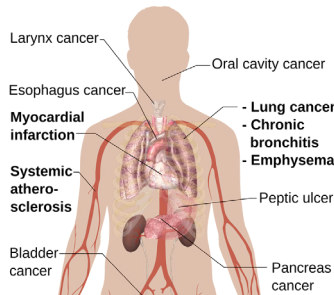
## TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...



**CHRONIC  
PAIN &  
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# TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...

## CHRONIC PAIN & SMOKING



### 1. If I quit smoking, will it help my pain?

There are no research studies which have definitively shown that quitting smoking will alleviate pain. However, there are many other

health benefits from quitting smoking that you should consider.

### 2. What are the health benefits to quitting smoking?

The major health benefits are related to reduced risks for heart attacks, strokes, and peripheral vascular disease. Quitting smoking also reduces your risk of chronic lung disease and cancer, particularly lung cancer.

### 3. How will quitting smoking affect my pain?

Most people who quit smoking say that they feel better overall. Increased energy levels will likely improve your ability to exercise. Better overall health, a well-balanced diet, and reduced stress are all benefits of the lifestyle changes which are associated with reduced smoking.

### 4. Can stopping smoking keep my pain from getting worse?

This is a question that scientists are considering. There is some evidence that the harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke can lead to problems with the supply of nutrients to body tissues. Since the discs in the back have very little blood supply, any factors which reduce nutrients can potentially affect the discs. This may lead to accelerated degeneration in some people.

### 5. I am going to have back surgery, should I stop smoking like my surgeon has suggested?

Most surgeons suggest stopping smoking during surgery so that the back is able to heal properly. There is some evidence to suggest that smoking may lead to poor healing and even poorer outcomes from spinal fusion surgery. Back surgery, or any procedure that involves stopping smoking, is a great opportunity to stop smoking for good!

### 6. What is the best way to stop smoking?

We are now becoming more educated about the difficulties people encounter when they try to stop smoking. Medications, classes, and behavioral modification programs are available which are designed to help persons to stop smoking. One or a combination of programs are usually necessary. One very useful method is to find a partner that shares your dedication to stop smoking. The support of your family is also very helpful.

### 7. I stopped smoking 5 years ago for 2 years and started back last year when my father passed away. I would like to try to stop smoking again, is there anything in particular that I can do?

You have stopped once, you can stop again! Stress is an important “trigger” for regular smokers and places former smokers at a high risk for relapse. Coping styles vary with individuals and it is important to develop a healthy way of handling stress. In particular, once you have stopped smoking you will be prepared to handle the “next wave” of stress that occurs in your life without returning to smoking.

### 8. Are there any other triggers that may keep me from stopping smoking?

Other than stress, a number of other “triggers” for smoking are important to consider. Certain foods, environments, other smokers, and even recreation can trigger the craving of nicotine. Behavioral programs are designed to identify and reduce these important triggers.

### 9. I think that smoking helps my pain, is there any explanation for this?

Many people use smoking to reduce stress. Stress and anxiety are associated with increasing the perception of pain, so smoking can appear to reduce your pain. Stopping smoking can also be stressful, leading to an exacerbation of pain. Doctors do not believe that the drug in cigarette smoke, nicotine, has health benefits which outweigh the risks of smoking.

### 10. My son is a smoker and has started a new job in construction. He has begun having back pain at the end of the day. Should he have an MRI?

An MRI may be necessary depending on the evaluation performed by his physician. The relationship to smoking and his low back pain is important to consider. Since his job will place stress on his lower back, disc degeneration could potentially be accelerated by smoking. We now know that most people who smoke started when they were very young. It is very important that we educate our children not to start smoking.