

UTERINE FIBROID EMBOLIZATION



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Uterine Artery Embolization (UAE)



Introduction

Uterine fibroid embolization is a non-surgical, uterine-sparing alternative to shrink symptomatic fibroids. Uterine fibroids are very common in women of reproductive age, with an estimated incidence of 20-25%.

The procedure is performed by an interventional radiologist trained to diagnose and treat medical conditions using image-guided techniques. *With the UFE procedure, most women return to normal activity within one to two weeks*

What is Fibroids?

Uterine fibroids are non-cancerous (benign) growths on or within the muscular walls of the uterus. They can be as small as a pea, or as large as a grapefruit.

Is UFE right for you?

If you experience symptoms due to uterine fibroids and wish to avoid surgery, you may be a candidate.

What Are the Symptoms

Some women may not know that they have fibroids, while others experience symptoms, such as pain, heavy bleeding or abdominal swelling. The symptoms depend on the size and location of the fibroid, but may include one or more of the following

- Heavy, prolonged menstrual periods, sometimes with clots
- Pelvic pain, pressure or heaviness
- Pain in the back or legs
- Pressure on the bladder causing a constant urge to urinate

Candidates for UFE

- Have been diagnosed with symptomatic uterine fibroids
- Desire to keep their uterus
- Don't want or may not be a good candidate for surgery
- Wish to avoid a blood transfusion for health or religious reasons
- Ideal candidates for UFE have completed child-bearing, however, desire for fertility does not preclude UFE treatment

How Are Uterine Fibroids Diagnosed

Fibroids can be confirmed by an abdominal ultrasound, magnetic resonance (MRI) or computed tomography (CT), all of which are painless diagnostic procedures

How are Uterine Fibroids Treated

Your options may include the following:

Medical Treatments

Myomectomy

Hysterectomy



Uterine fibroid embolization (UFE), also known as uterine artery embolization, is an alternative to surgery that preserves the uterus. A non-surgical, minimally invasive procedure, UFE blocks the blood supply to fibroids, causing them to shrink.

How Is UFE Performed

UFE is performed by an interventional radiologist, a doctor specializing in the use of imaging techniques to see inside the body and treat conditions without surgery. During UFE, the patient is given pain medications but remains awake. The interventional radiologist inserts a small tube, called a catheter, through a tiny incision in the skin, less than a quarter of an inch, into an artery at the top of the thigh. Using X-ray imaging, the catheter is guided into the uterine artery. Then tiny, round particles, the size of grains of sand, are injected through the catheter into the blood vessels leading to the fibroids. These particles cut off the blood supply to the fibroid. Blocking the blood flow to the fibroids causes them to shrink and alleviates symptoms. The procedure typically takes less than 1 hour to complete.



What Happens After the Procedure

Typically, patients stay in the hospital overnight. Shortly after the procedure, most women experience abdominal cramping similar to menstrual cramps, or nausea. During the hospitalization, the patient receives medications to control these common side effects. At home, the patient will likely have several days of intermittent cramps, and may feel somewhat weak. These symptoms usually begin to resolve within several days and most patients will fully recover in 7 to 10 days.

How Successful Is UFE

Approximately 9 women out of 10 who have this procedure experience

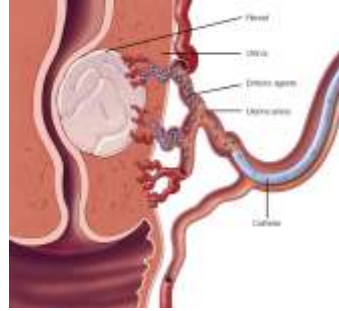
significant or total relief of heavy bleeding, pain and other symptoms. The procedure is effective for multiple fibroids, and the recurrence of treated fibroids is very rare.

Is This a Safe Procedure

Fibroid embolization is considered a very safe procedure. However, as with any medical procedure, there are risks. There is about a one percent chance of injury to the uterus.

Risks Associated with UFE

Overall, UFE is a safe procedure for treating symptomatic fibroids with minimal risk. The most reported risk factors and complications associated with UFE are transient amenorrhea, common short-term allergic reaction/rash, vaginal discharge/infection, possible fibroid passage, and post-embolization syndrome.



How Will UFE Affect My Fertility

By preserving the uterus, women may have an opportunity for future pregnancy, but the full effect of UFE on fertility has not been evaluated.

Advantages of UFE:

- Preserves your uterus
- Minimally invasive procedure
- No general anesthesia or large incisions
- Shorter recovery time and less pain compared to other surgical treatments
- Less medical risk compared to other surgical treatments

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