

ADVANTAGE

Uterine Fibroids



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Uterine fibroids are very common non-cancerous (benign) growths that develop in the muscular wall of the uterus.

COULD YOU HAVE UTERINE FIBROIDS?



SYMPTOMS

- Heavy/prolonged periods
- Pelvic pain
- Frequent urination
- Constipation
- Backaches/leg pains
- Painful intercourse
- Sometimes no symptoms

FIBROIDS RISK FACTORS



FAMILY HISTORY



PREVIOUS HISTORY OF FIBROIDS



RACE
Black African women are more prone to developing Fibroids



Questions and Answers

for Dr Thapelo Motshudi

- 1 What are uterine fibroids?**
Uterine fibroids are benign (non-malignant) growths of the muscle fibres and other parts of the uterus. They do not become cancerous, but do cause a lot of problems for women.
- 2 How do they present?**
Most women do not even know they have them. However, in a substantial number of women they cause a lot of suffering, depending on their size and location within the uterus. The most common symptoms are heavy menstrual periods, painful periods, anaemia (low red blood cells), infertility, urinary frequency, constipation, a palpable lump or pelvic mass.
- 3 How are they diagnosed?**
For many women the first time they are told that they have uterine fibroids is when they go to the gynaecologist and s/he performs an ultrasound scan. This is the cheapest way to visualize fibroids. Newer technologies such as an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is excellent at diagnosing them but are still relatively expensive.
- 4 How are they treated?**
Often it is only necessary to treat the symptoms with pain medication, iron replacement and hormonal therapies such as contraceptive pills or intrauterine devices (e.g. Mirena). Unfortunately, in some women these therapies fail to control the symptoms. These women are then offered treatments that preserve the uterus, or the whole uterus is removed.

Uterus conserving options:

1. Uterine Fibroid Embolization is a procedure performed by a Radiologist. Small tubes are passed from the artery in the upper leg into the arteries supplying the fibroids. Particles are then injected into the fibroid arteries, which blocks their nutrient supply so they can cause no further harm. This is a highly effective and internationally established treatment option.
2. A myomectomy, performed by gynaecologists, involves removal of the fibroids in open or laparoscopic surgery.
3. In endometrial ablation the inner lining of the uterus is heated. It is useful in a limited number of women but it can't treat large or deep fibroids.

- 5 Can I do anything to prevent them?**
Unfortunately there is no known preventative treatment. Early detection is critical to treatment before the fibroids get to large.

Uterine Fibroids can:

- Interfere with implantation of the ovum
- Compress the fallopian tubes, preventing conception
- Cause miscarriage
- Cause premature rupture of the membranes
- Cause abnormal labour
- Cause intrauterine growth retardation (IGR)

Uterine Artery Embolization is an invasive procedure performed to remove uterine fibroids. It can be performed under local anaesthetic with sedation.

WHAT IS FIBROID EMBOLIZATION?

1 EVALUATION



Before fibroid embolization, every patient is thoroughly evaluated to ensure the procedure is appropriate for them. This includes a review of medical history, general physical condition, and any other information pertinent to the case.

2 EXAMINATION



Next, the patient undergoes complete pelvic imaging, either ultrasound or MRI, to measure the size of the uterus and to look for any other conditions that might affect their health.

3 PROCEDURE



A small incision is made in your upper thigh. A tiny catheter is inserted through this incision and into the uterine artery. Small particles are then injected to block off the blood supply of the fibroids.