

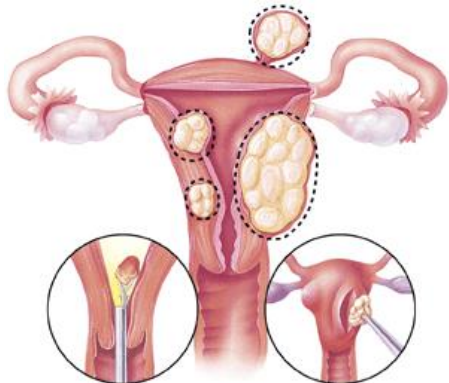
Endometrial Ablation – Destroying the Endometrial Lining

If the fibroids are small, the uterine lining can be destroyed with hot water or electric energy to reduce heavy bleeding. This is an outpatient surgery and is effective 85% of the time.



Removing the Fibroids – Myomectomy

Fibroids can be removed either through the vagina during hysteroscopy or through an abdominal incision (open surgery). These procedures preserve your uterus and your ability to have children, but may cause scarring of the uterus. Later in life, new fibroids may grow.

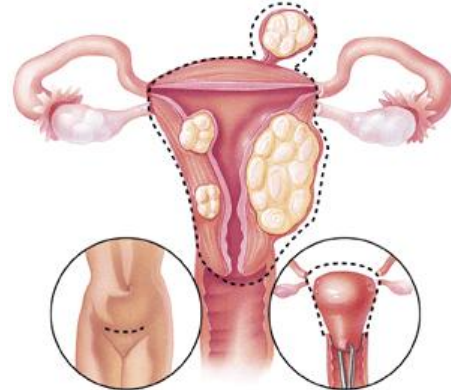


With hysteroscopic myomectomy, fibroids are removed using special instruments attached to a hysteroscope.

With abdominal myomectomy (laparotomy), fibroids are removed through an abdominal incision.

Removing Your Uterus – Hysterectomy

After a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus), fibroids will not return. But you won't be able to have children. Depending on the fibroids and your symptoms, this surgery may be a good solution. The ovaries are often retained to allow continued hormone production.

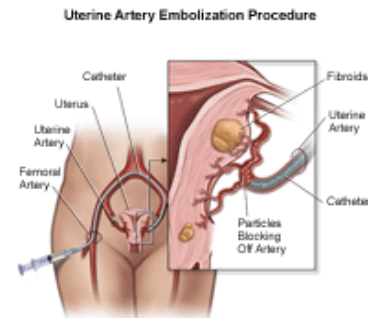


Abdominal hysterectomy

Vaginal hysterectomy

Uterine Fibroid Embolization

Tiny beads can be injected into the blood vessels of the uterus to block the blood flow to the fibroid. This may cause the fibroid to shrink. This is a non-surgical treatment for fibroids done by an Interventional Radiologist.



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Uterine Fibroids



Symptoms

Evaluation

Treatment options



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Fibroids are very common; half of all women have fibroids. They are muscle growths in your uterus. Fibroids are almost always noncancerous. They start as pea-sized lumps, but can grow steadily during your childbearing years and may even become as large as grapefruits.

Fibroids may require treatment if they become too large or cause symptoms. Fibroids tend to run in families, but no one knows why some women have them and others do not.

Problems Caused by Fibroids

Some fibroids may cause no symptoms. But others may cause:

- Excessive uterine bleeding, leading to anemia (decrease of red blood cells)
- Aching, heaviness, or fullness
- Back or abdominal pain
- Pain during intercourse
- Difficulty getting pregnant
- Frequent urge to urinate
- Difficult bowel movements
- Problems with pregnancy
- Infertility

Treatment Depends on You

No two women are the same. The type of treatment you will have depends on number and size of the fibroids, their location and rate of growth.

Your treatment decision also depends on the severity of your symptoms. There are many effective ways to treat fibroids. After your medical evaluation, your doctor will be able to discuss with you the best options to solve your particular problem.

Medical Evaluation

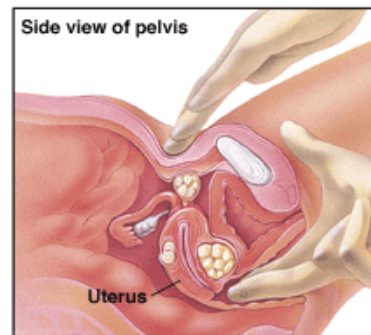
A medical evaluation can determine whether you have fibroids or other problems. It can also help you and your doctor decide which treatment, if any, is best for you. Your doctor will ask you about your bleeding and perform a pelvic exam. Your doctor may also suggest that you have one or more diagnostic tests to help provide details on the size and location of any fibroids.

Medical History

- The pattern of your menstrual bleeding
- When, if ever, you experience pelvic pain
- Your birth control method, if any
- Your family history of fibroids
- Your plans to have children

Pelvic Exam

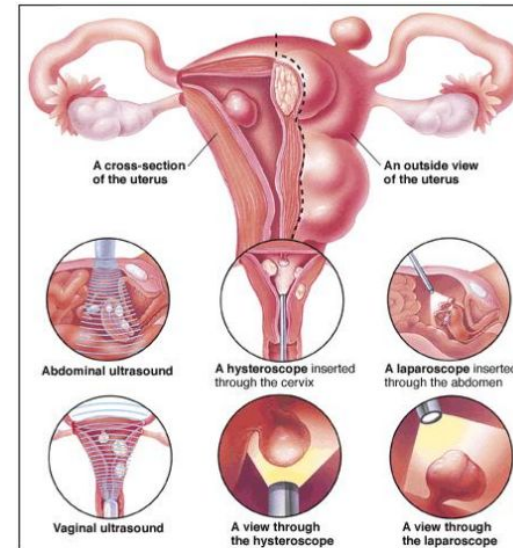
During a pelvic exam, your doctor examines your reproductive organs. The tenderness, texture, and overall size of your uterus are checked. If you have abnormal bleeding, your doctor will also check your vagina and cervix for signs of infection. A Thin Prep Pap™ test will be done to check for cervical cancer. A thin straw may be placed into your uterus to obtain a biopsy from the uterine lining. Since fibroids can grow on the back wall of your uterus, your doctor may also do a rectal exam.



A pelvic exam allows your doctor to feel fibroids in or around your uterus.

Diagnostic Tests

Three common tests can provide close-up views of the inside or outside of your uterus and confirm the size and general location of fibroids. Ultrasound is quick and painless. Hysteroscopy and laparoscopy are slightly more involved procedures.



Ultrasound

Ultrasound is often used to check fibroid growth. A device placed on your lower abdomen or inside your vagina bounces sound waves off your tissues, creating a picture. Other imaging tests may also be done to check fibroid growth and location.

Hysteroscopy

Hysteroscopy evaluates fibroids that extend into the uterine cavity. Your doctor looks directly at the inside of your uterus through a thin "telescope" with a light attached. This device is passed through your vagina and cervix.

Laparoscopy

Laparoscopy is used to look at the surface of your uterus. During this procedure, a telescope like instrument is passed through tiny incisions your abdomen to look directly at your uterus and ovaries. Occasionally, fibroids can be removed with the use of the laparoscope and other specialized instruments.

MRI

Magnetic Resonance Imaging or MRI uses a magnet to create a detailed view of the uterus and ovaries. You will have to lie on a sliding bed and remain still while the test is done. Although noisy, the MRI quickly obtains images of internal organs.



Your Treatment Options

How your fibroids are treated depends on the number, size, and location of the fibroids, how fast they're growing, and your symptoms. You and your doctor may decide to monitor them, remove them, or remove your uterus. But if your uterus is removed, you'll no longer be able to have children. Talk with your doctor about your plans to have a family, as well as the risks and benefits of your treatment options.