



# FIBROID TREATMENT CENTER

## WHAT ARE FIBROIDS?

Fibroids are tough balls of muscle that form in the uterus. The uterus, also called the womb, is the part of the woman's body that holds a baby if she is pregnant. People sometimes refer to fibroids as “tumors.” But fibroids are **not** a form of cancer. They are simply abnormal growths in the muscle of the uterus.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF FIBROIDS?

Fibroids often cause no symptoms at all. When they do cause symptoms, they can cause:

- Heavy periods
- Pain, pressure, or a feeling of “fullness” in the belly
- The need to urinate often
- Difficulty getting pregnant

## HOW ARE FIBROIDS TREATED?

There are several treatment options. Each option has its own pros and cons. The right treatment for you will depend on:

- The symptoms you have
- Your age (because most fibroids shrink or stop causing symptoms after menopause)
- Whether you are done having children
- Whether your fibroids cause so much bleeding that you have a condition called anemia
- The size, number, and location of your fibroids
- How you feel about the risks and benefits of the different options

If you are thinking about treatment, ask your doctor or nurse which treatments might help you. Then ask what the risks and benefits of those options are. Ask, too, what happens if you do NOT have treatment. And be sure to mention whether or not you would like to have children.

Here are the options:

- **Surgery to remove the fibroids** (doctors call this surgery “myomectomy”) – During this operation, the doctor removes the fibroids but leaves the uterus in place. It is effective, but it is not always a permanent fix, because fibroids can come back. Myomectomy is often a good choice for women who may want (more) children.
- **Treatment to cut off the blood supply to the fibroids** (doctors call this procedure “uterine artery embolization” or “uterine fibroid embolization”) – During this procedure, the doctor inserts a thin tube into an artery in the leg and threads it up to the uterus. Then he or she uses tiny plastic beads to block the artery that brings blood to the fibroid. After the procedure, the fibroid no longer gets blood, so it shrinks. This procedure is not appropriate for women who may want to get pregnant.
- **Surgery to remove the uterus** (“hysterectomy”) – This surgery gets rid of fibroids and the problems they cause forever. Women who have this surgery cannot have fibroids come back. But they can never bear children. The Fibroid Treatment Center does not advocate for hysterectomy.

## HOW DO I CHOOSE WHICH OPTION IS RIGHT FOR ME?

You work with our doctors to understand how the different treatment options would affect you. Then the two of you work together to choose the option that's right for you. For women who may still want to have children, myomectomy may be the best choice. Women who do not want to have (more) children can often choose from all the options. They need to consider how invasive each surgery is and whether they prefer surgery over taking medicines.