

What is Uterine Embolization?

Uterine Artery (or Fibroid) Embolization is a less invasive approach to treating symptomatic uterine fibroids. Uterine fibroids are benign, non-cancerous growths of the uterine muscle that require a significant amount of blood flow to grow and thrive. This over-supply of blood often leads to heavy menstrual bleeding and even anemia (low blood counts).

During the procedure, you will lie flat on the examination table and IV sedation will be given through an IV to make you comfortable. A small, flexible plastic catheter will be inserted through the femoral artery in the groin and guiding it into the left and right uterine arteries. Through the catheter, tiny plastic particles mixed in saline and iodine dye are injected into the uterine arteries. The embolic particles significantly decrease blood flow starving the fibroids of the nutrients they need to thrive.

In certain circumstances, chemotherapy drugs are administered at the time of embolization or mixed with the particles to block the artery (chemoembolization). This allows a higher concentration of chemotherapy (compared with systemic chemotherapy) to be administered where it remains for up to one month within the tumor.

The average length of the procedure is between 1-2 hours. At the completion of the examination, the catheter is removed and pressure is applied over the groin for 10-15 minutes to prevent bleeding. You will need to remain flat in bed for 4-6 hours following the procedure to prevent bleeding from the groin.

Following the embolization, you may experience significant abdominal pain that may start during the latter part of the procedure and usually lasts 2 or 3 days. This may also be associated with fever, nausea and vomiting, which is known as "post-embolization syndrome." You will receive a script to control the pain and nausea, which can last up to 5 days depending upon the severity and duration of the post embolization syndrome.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- No solid food after midnight the day before your procedure. Clear liquids are allowed the morning of the procedure unless told otherwise. This includes: water, tea, broth, popsicles, coffee without cream, 7-up, sprite, apple juice, or white cranberry juice.
- Take any medications you are on the day of the procedure. If you are on insulin ask your doctor about any adjustments that may be needed. If you take Coumadin (Warfarin), Plavix, Aspirin, or Pletal you will need to stop taking it 3 days prior to the procedure.
- Your arrival time is 1 ½ hours prior to your procedure. We will need the additional time to do the necessary lab tests, start an IV, ask pre-procedural questions and do a nursing assessment.
- Please take any heart or blood pressure medicine with water.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- You may need to recover in a bed at our facility for a period of 4 to 6 hours.

You will need someone to drive you home.

You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.

If you do not have a ride home your procedure WILL BE RESCHEDULED!!!

You cannot use public transportation!!!!