

Frequently Asked Questions About Fibroid Embolization

What kind of fibroids can you embolize?

All sizes of fibroids have been successfully embolized. The shrinkage will be felt more in fibroids smaller than a five - month sized pregnancy. The embolization process affects all fibroids within the uterus wherever they are located.

Is embolization experimental?

Embolization has been used to control hemorrhage (heavy bleeding) in many parts of the body, including the uterus for more than twenty years. Nothing is experimental about the procedure.

How long have you been performing embolization for control of heavy bleeding?

At UCLA, embolization for fibroids was first performed in 1994. We were the first center to perform UFE in the U.S. Since then, we have treated more than 1,500 women. Worldwide, embolization has been performed on an estimated 100,000 women, and more every day.

What about fertility?

Many women have conceived and had normal babies after embolization. We know of no patient who could become pregnant before embolization that could not after this procedure. The risks to fertility associated with major surgery such as myomectomy are much greater than those associated with embolization. We will be glad to discuss this question with you.

Is there a “right” age for embolization?

Fibroids affect women of all ages even those in menopause. Whenever fibroids become a problem for you is the right time for some sort of therapy, whatever type you choose.

Can the plastic particles used in embolization cause any damage to other organs?

Plastic particles are injected into the artery supplying the fibroids. They are carried under pressure from the heart into smaller arteries where they lodge. They cannot travel into other parts of the body. The uterus, unlike the fibroids, gets its blood supply from other arteries, which swell when the uterine arteries are cut off by embolization.

How fast does embolization work?

Fibroids begin to shrink immediately. Improvement in bleeding is immediate, and shrinkage is measured at both six weeks and six months after embolization.

Are there side effects?

Almost every patient experiences cramping pain for one or two days after embolization. We will control the discomfort for you, if necessary, re-admitting you to the hospital. Some patients, especially those with larger fibroids experience a low-grade fever after embolization.

Is embolization covered by my insurance?

There are so many insurance plans, that it is impossible to answer such a question without evaluating your benefits. However, embolization is a benefit offered by almost every plan with which we have spoken.