

- A uterine fibroid tumor is a benign growth that appears on the muscular wall of the uterus and is the most common in the female genital tract. They range in size from microscopic to masses that fill the entire abdominal cavity. In some cases, fibroids can be as large as a 5-month pregnancy. Uterine fibroids can affect women of all ages, but are most common in women ages 40 to 50. In most cases, there is more than one fibroid in the uterus. Fibroids consist of dense, fibrous tissue (hence the name 'fibroid') and are nourished and sustained by a series of blood vessels.
- Approximately 600,000 hysterectomies are performed annually in the United States, about 300,000 due to uterine fibroids.
- More than \$5 billion dollars is spent on hysterectomies annually, and up to 144 million work hours are lost due to procedure recovery.
- Over 50 percent of women who get hysterectomies have their ovaries removed, rendering them infertile.
- Approximately 660 women die each year in the United States due to complications from a hysterectomy.
- As many as 80 percent of all women have uterine fibroids, and one in four have symptoms severe enough to require treatment.
- An estimated 13,000-14,000 uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) procedures are performed annually in the United States
- There are three different classifications of fibroids depending on where they are located in the uterus: intramural uterine fibroids, located in the wall of the uterus; submucosal uterine fibroids, located on the inside lining of the uterus; subserosal uterine fibroids, located outside the lining of the uterus.
- Embolization has emerged as the safest, simplest, cost effective way to treat fibroids. Embolization requires a very small incision, about the size of a freckle, which is made in the upper thigh. A tiny catheter is inserted through this incision and into the femoral artery. Using x-ray guidance, a trained physician locates the feeder vessels which supply blood to each fibroid. Microscopic inert particles are injected into the vessels, blocking blood supply that nourishes the fibroid. Without a steady blood supply, the fibroids begin to dwindle and shrink. Embolization basically cures fibroids by starving them.

- Uterine Fibroid Embolization has an overall success rate of 94 percent. This means 94 percent of all patients who had the procedure experienced relief from their symptoms and significant fibroid shrinkage.

99 percent of patients had immediate relief from heavy bleeding

94 percent of patients experienced 50-60 percent shrinkage

33 percent of patients who attempted to conceive were successful

99 percent of patients returned to work in less than a week

- There are 10 primary advantages to embolization:

1. **It's safe.**

More than 100,000 women have been successfully treated.

2. **It's simple.**

Most procedures take about half an hour.

3. **It's cost effective.**

No lengthy hospital stays or the fees that come with them.

4. **Symptom relief is immediate.**

Pain, heavy bleeding, anemia, fatigue will end with embolization.

5. **No hospital stay.**

This is an out-patient treatment.

6. **No cutting.**

With embolization there are no scalpels, sutures or scarring.

7. **No 'going under'.**

You won't be unconscious or exposed to the risks of general anesthetic.

8. **Less downtime.**

Most patients return to work in a matter of days.

9. **No recurrence.**

Fibroids don't return, as they often do with surgeries like myomectomy.

10. **Keep your fertility.**

There's no trauma to, or removal of, the uterus.

Sources: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Uterine Fibroid Foundation, Dr. Bruce McLucas <http://www.brucemclucas.com>