

## Patient Information Guide

### Uterine fibroid embolization (UFE)

Uterine fibroids are muscular tumors of the uterus that are almost always benign (non-cancerous). Typically, women who have uterine fibroids have more than one fibroid and they can range widely in size. For example, a large fibroid or multiple fibroids may enlarge the uterus to the same size as a six- or seven-month pregnancy.



#### Q&A

##### What causes fibroids?

The exact reason why uterine fibroids develop is unknown. However, medical researchers have associated the condition with two factors—genetics and hormones.

##### How are fibroids diagnosed?

Usually, uterine fibroids are first diagnosed during a pelvic exam performed by your gynecologist or primary care doctor. If your uterus feels enlarged, your doctor may send you for an ultrasound examination or MRI. These exams can detect if fibroids are present, as well as determine their precise location and size.

##### What are the symptoms?

Common fibroid symptoms—which can resemble those caused by other conditions—include:

##### Abnormal Uterine Bleeding

- Heavy, prolonged menstrual periods
- Spotting or bleeding between menstrual periods

##### Pain Symptoms

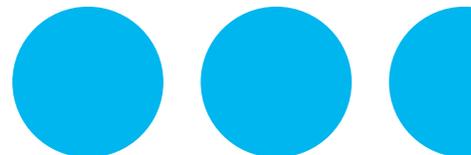
- Increased menstrual cramping
- Pelvic pain or discomfort
- Pain in the back, sides, or legs

##### Pressure Symptoms

- Frequent urination or constipation due to pressure on the bladder or bowel
- Bloating or distention of the abdomen

##### How common are fibroids?

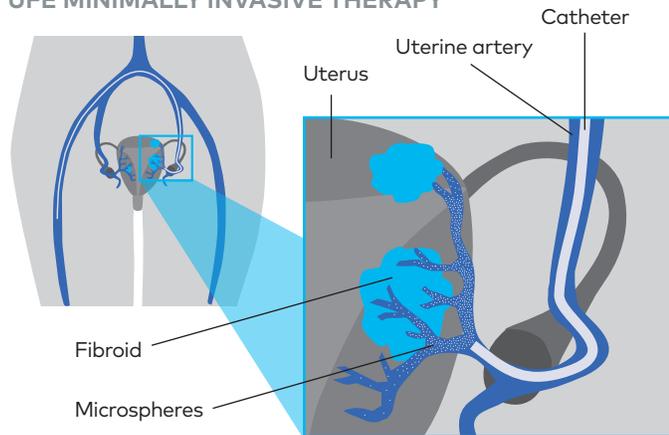
- Uterine fibroids are the most common neoplasm (abnormal growth) affecting women<sup>1</sup>
- African-American women are 3x to 5x more likely to have fibroids than white, Asian, or Hispanic women.
- 40-60% of women 35+ have uterine fibroids of significant size.<sup>2</sup>



## What are my treatment options?

Some treatment options include drug therapy, surgical therapies, and non-surgical therapy. Uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) is a minimally invasive approach to treating fibroids that is designed to preserve your uterus and shrink your fibroids for symptomatic relief. UFE can be performed under conscious sedation by a specially trained physician — an interventional radiologist. It works by blocking the flow of blood to uterine fibroids, depriving them of the oxygen and nutrients they require to grow.

### UFE MINIMALLY INVASIVE THERAPY



First, a small tube, called a catheter, is inserted into the groin or the wrist to reach the vessels that surround your fibroids. The radiologist then delivers microspheres through the catheter.

Please refer to the Glossary for more information on other treatment options.

## What are the benefits of UFE?

- Minimally invasive, and often performed as an outpatient procedure<sup>3</sup>
- Preservation of the uterus and ovaries<sup>4</sup>
- Shorter hospitalization and faster return to work compared to hysterectomy and myomectomy<sup>5</sup>
- Decrease in symptoms caused by fibroids: heavy, prolonged periods; menstrual cramping, and abdominal pain/pressure<sup>6</sup>
- Lower rate of adverse events compared with standard interventional treatments<sup>3</sup>
- Covered by most insurance companies



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## How do I decide which treatment option is best for me?

It is important that you understand all of the treatments that are available to you. You should have a detailed discussion with your physician about your options, including benefits and potential risks. The procedures and information described on this page are not intended to be a substitute for a physician's judgment. Only you and your physician can decide which choice is best for you. For more safety information, visit [www.varian.com/safety](http://www.varian.com/safety)

There are risks associated with uterine fibroid embolization which include but are not limited to: reduced blood flow to the leg, allergic drug reactions, infection, uterine ischemia (a decreasing or ineffective blood supply to the uterus), or uteroenteric fistula (an abnormal connection between the ureter and gastrointestinal tract), amenorrhea (absence of menstruation) following the procedure, premature menopause, infection of the endometrium or other structures in the pelvis, which, if severe, could require a hysterectomy, and rupture of the uterus. Be sure to talk with your doctor so that you thoroughly understand all of the risks and benefits associated with the treatment of uterine fibroids.

### References

1. Stewart EA, et al. [Epidemiology of uterine fibroids: a systematic review](#). *BJOG*. 2017 Sep;124(10):1501-1512.
2. Khan AT, et al. [Uterine fibroids: current perspectives](#). *Int J Womens Health*. 2014 Jan 29;6:95-114.
3. Siskin GP, et al. [A Prospective Multicenter Comparative Study between Myomectomy and Uterine Artery Embolization with Polyvinyl Alcohol Microspheres](#); Long-term Clinical Outcomes in Patients with Symptomatic Uterine Fibroids. *J Vasc Interv Radiol*. 2006;17(8):1287-1295.
4. Moss JG, et al. [Randomised comparison of uterine artery embolisation \(UAE\) with surgical treatment in patients with symptomatic uterine fibroids \(REST trial\): 5-year results](#). *BJOG Int J Obstetrics Gynaecol*. 2011;118(8):936-944.
5. Edwards RD, et al. [Uterine-Artery Embolization versus Surgery for Symptomatic Uterine Fibroids](#). *N Engl J Med*. 2007;356(4):360-370.
6. Stampfl U, et al. [Midterm Results of Uterine Artery Embolization Using Narrow-Size Calibrated Embosphere Microspheres](#). *Cardiovasc Inter Rad*. 2010;34(2):295-305.

## Glossary

### Drug therapy

Drug therapy is the use of drugs to control symptoms. These drugs include non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), birth control pills, and hormone therapy).

### Minimally invasive therapy

Uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) is a minimally invasive approach to treating fibroids that works by blocking the flow of blood to uterine fibroids, depriving them of the oxygen and nutrients they require to grow.

### Surgical therapies\*

**Hysterectomy:** A hysterectomy is a surgery performed to remove a woman's uterus and cervix. A supracervical hysterectomy only removes the uterus. In all cases, menstruation stops and a woman loses the ability to bear children.

**Myomectomy:** A myomectomy is a surgical procedure to remove uterine fibroids, without removing the uterus. Depending on the location of the fibroids, the myomectomy can be done through the pelvic area or through the vagina and cervix.

*\*In many situations a minimally invasive approach may be used with hysterectomy or myomectomy.*