



Patient Guide: Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) Procedure



Introduction

A Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) is a procedure for patients with symptomatic fibroids. This procedure is performed in the Medical Imaging department at Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital by one of our Interventional Radiologists:

- Dr. Raymond Chan
- Dr. Peter DeMaio
- Dr. Vikas Agarwal
- Dr. Vince Partap
- Dr. Jonathan Chung

For more information, please call the Interventional Radiology Department during working hours at 905-417-2000 extension 5975.



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Procedure expectations

Prior to the procedure:

- Please pack a small bag with anything you may need for an overnight stay, keep valuables at home. There is a high probability that you will have your own private hospital room, although this cannot be guaranteed.

On the day of the procedure:

- In the morning, you can have light breakfast (e.g., coffee and toast) prior to your arrival at the hospital.
- You must be driven to the hospital and picked up from the hospital by a responsible adult.

Once you arrive at the hospital:

- Check in at **Registration**, then proceed to **Peri-Operative Services** for the procedure. Volunteers will guide you to where you need to go.
- You will change into a hospital gown, then a nurse will insert an IV (small tube in your vein) and draw bloodwork if needed. You will also be given an anti-inflammatory medication.

During the procedure:

- You will have a urinary catheter inserted into the bladder.
- Medication will be given through your IV to help promote relaxation prior to procedure. A pain medication pump will be set-up and you will be told when to start using the pump to have medication administered.
- You may be in the procedure room for a few hours.

After the procedure:

- You will recover in the recovery area, then be moved to your hospital room. You will be released from the hospital the next day by the gynecologist on-call.
- There may be circumstances where your discharge from hospital is earlier or later than expected.

Recovery

Activities after the procedure:

- You will need **one to two weeks off** from work and other activities. Most patients recover after one week while some patients require more time. After two weeks, you may resume normal activities including sexual activity and exercise.
- After two weeks, you can be as active as you feel comfortable for the rest of your recovery period.
- You may or may not notice a large bruise or hard lump over the puncture site e.g. right hip joint (groin). This should go away in three (3) to four (4) weeks.

Typical symptoms after UFE:

- Mild nausea, vomiting right after your procedure and possibly for several days after.
- Pain or cramps. They will slowly get better in one (1) to two (2) weeks.
- Fever less than 38.5°C for three (3) days after the procedure.

Vaginal discharge and spotting:

- Your menstrual periods may be different for a few cycles after the procedure. You may miss a period, have lighter or heavier bleeding, or more cramps. This may last about six (6) to 12 months.
- Occasionally, some patients discharge fibroid tissue. If the vaginal discharge is thick or foul-smelling, you may be experiencing a problem with a fibroid passing through and need to see a gynecologist.



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Medications

You will be given a prescription for medications to manage pain following your UFE procedure.

Ibuprofen:

- Anti-inflammatory
- Also known as Motrin
- Take the full 10-day course regardless of your level of pain. Take after eating or drinking.

Oxycodone with acetaminophen or Codeine with acetaminophen:

- Pain relief
- Also known as Percocet or Tylenol 3 (T3)
- Take this only for extra pain relief, if the Ibuprofen is not enough. Do not stop Ibuprofen.

Docusate sodium:

- Stool softener
- Also known as Colace
- Take this medication if you are taking Percocet or Tylenol 3, in order to prevent constipation
- Prune juice and bran may help

Possible Complications

Fever and night sweats are expected, however:

- If the fever lasts longer than three (3) days and is higher than 38.5°C,
- If you get a new fever more than a week after the procedure, or
- If you experience other unusual symptoms, the symptoms get worse, and/or the symptoms last longer than a week,
 - **Please visit the nearest Emergency Department**, your family doctor or call the Interventional Radiology Department during working hours at **905-417-2000** extension **5975**

Effect of UFE on menstrual cycle:

- Most patients experience decreased bleeding with normal menstrual cycles after undergoing the UFE procedure.
- 2-15% of patients experience “premature menopause” and this tends to happen to patients who are nearing the age of menopause at the time of UFE.

Follow Up

A follow-up visit will be arranged with your gynecologist.

Keep track of your symptoms:

- Have your periods decreased in heaviness and length?
- Are you experiencing less pain due to fibroids?
- Do you feel less pressure on your bladder?
- Do you experience less bloating?

Fibroids need time to shrink:

- Some patients notice improvement within the first month after procedure while some may need up to a year to notice any changes
- Bleeding and other symptoms improve in 90% of patients, 12 months after the UFE procedure
- At three (3) months, the average reduction in fibroid size is about 40-70% and the overall reduction in uterus size is about 40-50%.
- Research suggests successfully treated fibroids will not grow again.
- In up to 10-20% of patients, UFE is not successful, and your gynecologist will explore other treatment options with you.



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