



Uterine fibroids are very common - up to **80% of women** can have them before they turn 50.

Many women experience health conditions that affect the uterus. Since these conditions can present with similar symptoms, it's important to talk with your health care provider so you can get the right diagnosis and treatment.

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UTERINE FIBROIDS

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WHAT ARE UTERINE FIBROIDS?

Uterine fibroids are tumors that grow on the muscular walls of the uterus (womb) and can be one tumor or several of different sizes. Although they're almost always benign (not cancerous), the symptoms they can cause can make everyday life uncomfortable and even affect fertility.

Fibroids can also make it hard to get pregnant or stay pregnant whether you're thinking about having a baby now or in the future.

Having non-cancerous fibroids **does not increase** the chance you will get cancer in the future, but treating fibroids now if your symptoms are severe, can make life more comfortable.

RISK FACTORS

Uterine fibroids are very common. Some factors can increase your chances of having fibroids, such as:

- Being age 30-40, when fibroids are most common.
- Being overweight or obese.
- Race: Black women are three-times more likely to be diagnosed with fibroids than White women.
- Having a family history of fibroids.
- Having your first period early – before the age of 12.
- Eating too much red meat as opposed to green vegetables.



SYMPTOMS

Uterine fibroids tend to affect women during their childbearing years (20s – 40s). Not everyone will feel the effects of symptoms, but if you do, it is important to talk with your health care provider about treatment options.



Abnormal Bleeding

- Bleeding or spotting between menstrual periods.
- Needing to change your tampon or pad more than once per hour during your period.
- Periods that last longer than 7 days.
- Heavy bleeding (which can be heavy enough to cause anemia) or painful periods.



Pelvic Discomfort

- A general feeling of heaviness, pressure, or discomfort in the pelvis or lower abdomen.
- Difficulty lying face-down, bending over, or exercising without feeling uncomfortable.



Pelvic Pain

- Acute: severe pain in a specific area; usually goes away within a few weeks.
- Chronic: pain does not completely resolve itself, but tends to be more mild.



Bowel Problems

- Difficult or painful bowel movements.
- Frequent hemorrhoids.



Bladder Problems

- Frequent urination.
- Waking up several times a night to urinate.
- Difficulty urinating, even with a full bladder.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Uterine fibroids are treated depending on the impact they have on your life. If you don't currently have symptoms, you may not need any treatment at all. You have options, and it is important for your doctor to know what you are most comfortable with.

Medication

- **Contraceptive pills** or an **IUD** to reduce bleeding.
- **GnRH agonists** – typically used only before surgery – temporarily shrinks fibroids by stopping your body from producing estrogen.

Surgery

- A **myomectomy** will remove the fibroids and preserve your uterus for fertility. While it is effective, there is a chance that your fibroids could grow back.
- A **uterine artery embolization (UAE)** stops blood flow to the fibroid causing it to die.
- A **hysterectomy** is a major surgery that removes the uterus.