

Uterine Fibroids

Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment

Uterine fibroids are swellings in the uterus. They are formed by excess normal uterine muscle tissue and hence are not cancers. Although they are not cancers, they can be symptomatic, depending on the location of the fibroid. They are classified according to location. The symptoms and treatment depend on the location of the fibroid.

Symptoms / Causes

Symptoms:

Most women who have uterine fibroids do not have any symptoms.

- Abnormal uterine bleeding
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Pelvic pain, pressure, pressure on the bladder (causing frequent urination or blocking urination), or pressure on the rectum along with pain.

Although fibroids do not interfere with ovulation, they may impair fertility and lead to poorer pregnancy outcomes. This is true especially of submucosal fibroids that deform the inner uterine cavity. They often cause miscarriage too.

Causes:

No one definitely knows the cause of the fibroid formation. People have observed the following:

1. It occurs in families. If a mother or sister has fibroids, then the chances of having it are high
 2. It is more common in some races, especially those who start having periods before the age of ten
 3. High alcohol intake, high blood pressure and pelvic infections increase the incidence
- On the other hand, pregnancy and taking oral contraceptive pills can decrease the incidence.

How Are Uterine Fibroids Diagnosed?

Uterine fibroids could be diagnosed by pelvic examination. However, they are commonly diagnosed by ultrasound. Often, the ultrasound is very helpful in differentiating the fibroid from other conditions, such as ovarian tumors. Diagnosis may also include MRI or CT scans.

Risks of Untreated Fibroids / Treatment

In most cases, uterine fibroids do not cause any problems, even if they are not treated. Some fibroids that are not causing symptoms may still be removed or observed, especially if they are growing rapidly, since there is a rare, cancerous type of fibroid.

Medical treatments: Medicines used to shrink fibroids by as much as half of the original size.

Surgical treatments: Surgery is usually the preferred method of treatment- hysterectomy or myomectomy. *If the doctor suspects there may be malignancy or cancer, then surgery is necessary.*

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