

# Physician Forum

MINIMALLY INVASIVE, HIGHLY EFFECTIVE  
UTERINE FIBROID EMBOLIZATION AVAILABLE  
AT STS. MARY & ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Excellence Above All

To provide women with an important health care option, Sts. Mary & Elizabeth Hospital provides uterine fibroid embolization through the expertise of the board-certified interventional radiologists and endovascular specialists at Louisville Endovascular.

As many as 20 to 40 percent of women 35 and older have benign, non-cancerous growths in or on the walls of the uterus. Most of these uterine fibroids cause no symptoms. However, depending on the location, size and number of fibroids, some women experience symptoms that include:

- Heavy, prolonged periods, sometimes with clots;
- Bleeding between periods;
- Anemia;
- Pain, pressure or a feeling of heaviness in the pelvic area or back of the legs;
- Pain during sexual intercourse;
- Bladder pressure leading to a constant urge to urinate;
- Pressure on the bowel, leading to constipation and bloating;
- Abnormally enlarged or protruding abdomen.

Several treatment options are available.

Medications such as hormone treatments may be used to treat the fibroids.

However, they often cause menopause-like symptoms, and fibroid symptoms generally return when medication is stopped. Surgical treatments include hysterectomy and myomectomy, both of which require anesthesia and lengthy recovery times. For a growing number of women, uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) is the preferred option.

UFE is a minimally invasive procedure performed by an interventional radiologist on patients who have received a mild sedative. The interventional radiologist makes an incision of less than 1/4-inch at the top of the thigh and uses x-ray guidance to thread a catheter to the uterine artery. Tiny round particles called Embosphere® Microspheres, the size of grains of sand, are then injected into the blood vessels that supply the fibroids. The process is repeated in the other uterine artery. This completely blocks blood flow to the fibroids, causing them to shrink and die. The procedure takes about 90 minutes and requires only a band-aid at the incision site. Most women can resume light activities in a few days and are able to return to normal activity in less than a week.

Up to 90 percent of women who have the UFE procedure experience significant or total relief of heavy bleeding, pelvic pain, frequency of urination and other symptoms.

Ideal candidates for UFE include women who:

- Do not intend to get pregnant in the future;
- Want to keep their uterus;
- Do not want surgery;
- Prefer an outpatient or one-night hospital stay;
- May not be good candidates for surgery.

Sts. Mary & Elizabeth Hospital is the only center in the region that offers a complete, comprehensive UFE program, with three subspecialty, UFE-trained physicians. For more information about uterine fibroid embolization at Sts. Mary & Elizabeth Hospital or to schedule a procedure, call (502) 361-6764.

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