



Fibroids

January 20, 2014 [Dr. Kela Henry](#)

Fibroids are non cancerous tumors that grow inside and around the wall of the uterus. Black women develop fibroids at higher rates compared to women in other racial groups. Although many women with fibroids have no symptoms, a quarter of women with them suffer at some point with any of the following: longer heavier periods, pelvic pain and pressure, constipation, back pain, fertility problems, urinary frequency, and sexual difficulties.

Fibroids are believed to be caused by high levels of estrogen. Genetics and stress play a part, and other risk factors are obesity, diabetes, poor diet, and lack of exercise. The source of estrogen can be high dose birth control pills and foods known to cause mucus production in the body like chocolate and dairy products. Much of the meat and poultry available in grocery stores comes from animals fed hormones; these hormones make their way into our bodies when we consume it.

There are several treatments available for fibroids, and these fall into two basic categories as far as conventional medicine is concerned—medication or surgery. In regards to medication, hormones are used to manipulate the estrogen so that the fibroid tumors shrink. Hormones called GnRH agonists (brand name Lupron) are taken to halt the body's natural production of estrogen, thus inducing the regression of the fibroids. However the side effects include hot flashes, joint aches, osteoporosis, and difficulty sleeping so this method should not be used longer than about six months. Another option is lower dose birth control pills. Because these pills have a lower dose of estrogen, they do not contribute to fibroid growth and help control the bleeding from heavy periods. Unfortunately, the fibroids may grow back after medication is stopped.

In terms of surgical options, here are the top three :(1) UFE (uterine fibroid embolization), (2) myomectomy, and (3) hysterectomy. UFE is the newest and least invasive procedure mentioned here. During the procedure the patient undergoes conscious sedation. (This is not like general anesthesia. It differs in that the patient is given a tranquilizer so that she cannot feel or remember what is going on, but can remain awake). After an incision is made in the groin, a catheter is inserted and guided to the uterine blood vessels that supply

not only the uterus but the fibroid tumors also. Small plastic beads are then injected into the arteries, and these shut off the blood flow to the tumors, causing them to shrink and die. Usually patients stay overnight at a hospital and then 7-10 days in recovery at home. Myomectomy is targeted surgery that removes only the tumors and spares the uterus. This is a good choice for women who want to have children. The size and location of the fibroids upon the uterus determines the surgical approach: through a bikini line incision like most C-sections, laparoscopically, or through the vagina. The last resort is hysterectomy. This is an option for women who prefer it or whose tumors are so large and problematic that all other treatments fail. Both myomectomy and hysterectomy require general anesthesia, and recovery periods are longer than for UFE.

In terms of prevention and natural alternatives, the focus should be on diet. As mentioned previously, consumption of meat (like beef and pork), chicken, and mucus producing foods (chocolate and dairy) contribute to fibroid growth. If you already have fibroids eliminate white sugar, tobacco products, and junk food. Eat more leafy green vegetables, seeds, whole grains, berries, citrus fruits, and fresh squeezed juices. Take antioxidant supplements and fast once a month. During the fast skip the mucus producing foods listed in this article. Consider doing a full cleanse of the body to flush it of toxins as well. These measures decrease the circulating levels of estrogen that lead to fibroid development.

For more information visit the following websites:

www.healthydirections.com/fight-fibroids-naturally

www.fibroids.net

www.womenshealth.gov

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