

Uterine Embolization

What is uterine embolization?

Uterine embolization is a procedure a radiologist (doctor) does to treat uterine fibroids. Uterine fibroids are non-cancerous growths in the uterus.

With the help of x-rays to guide us, we insert a thin tube (a catheter) into your blood vessel. We move the tube through the vessel to the uterus.

When the tube reaches the vessel that is supplying the fibroids with blood, the doctor injects small sand-like particles through the tube. When the particles reach the site, they block the supply of blood to the fibroids. Without the blood supply, the fibroids die and begin to shrink.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

Please let your doctor know if:

1. You are currently taking any medicines. To reduce your risk of bleeding during and after your procedure, your doctor will tell you which medicines to stop taking 3 to 7 days before your procedure. This may include:
 - Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA, such as Aspirin or other brand names)
 - Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS, such as Advil or Motrin, or other brand names)
 - Blood thinners (such as Plavix, Coumadin, or other brand names).Your doctor may also instruct you on other medicines you may be taking.
2. You are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or are breast feeding.
 - If you are pregnant, we may cancel your procedure to reduce the risk of radiation exposure to your fetus.

- At this time, it is not clear if the dye has any effect on breast milk.
3. You have any allergies. It is important to share if you are allergic to local anesthetics (freezing medicine) or any type of dye containing iodine.
 - If you do have known allergies, we suggest you wear your MedicAlert bracelet on the day of your visit.

About 1 week before the procedure:

- You will either visit in person or have a detailed phone call with the radiology nurse. She will explain the procedure and the flow of the day.

The day before the procedure:

- Your doctor will ask you to not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before, or several hours before, the procedure. If we need to give you a sedative (medicine to help you relax) during the procedure, having an empty stomach will help prevent you from feeling sick.

On the day of the procedure:

Please bring the following to the hospital:

- Your health card (OHIP) and photo ID.
- All the medicines you are currently taking, including over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, in their original containers.
- Sleepwear, slippers, and toiletries (such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, hairbrush, electric shaver, feminine supplies) for your overnight stay.

Do not bring jewelry or other valuables.

Continued on back of page. Please turn over.



On the day of the procedure (continued):

- Please remove any jewelry, dental appliances, eyeglasses, hair clips or metal objects you are wearing that may interfere with the x-ray images.

What can I expect during the procedure?

You will be awake for the procedure. We may give you a sedative.

To do this procedure, your bladder must be empty. We will insert a small tube (catheter) into your bladder to drain the pee out.

During the procedure, we will numb a small area in your groin with a local anesthetic so that you do not feel pain. You should only feel pressure during the procedure.

We make a small cut in your groin to access your blood vessel. With the help of x-rays to guide us, we insert a thin tube (a catheter) through this cut into the vessel. We move the tube through the vessel towards your uterus. When the tube reaches the vessel in the uterus that is giving the fibroids blood, the doctor then injects small sand-like particles through the tube.

When the procedure is over, we will remove the catheter. We apply pressure for 5 to 10 minutes over the cut and then apply a bandage.

The length of the procedure will vary depending on the patient.

What can I expect after the procedure?

- We will admit you overnight so that we can watch and monitor you. We will also help manage your pain.
- Your nurse will make sure you keep the leg with the puncture site straight for 24 hours, including during bed rest and when using the bathroom.

This will prevent any bleeding or bruising under the skin from the puncture.

- You will be able to go home the day after your procedure. However, you will not be able to drive yourself home. **Please make sure you have someone to drive you home.**

How do I care for myself at home?

- Follow any instructions your nurse gave to you before you left the hospital.
- For your safety, please make sure you have a responsible adult stay with you until you have settled and are comfortable at home.
- You may take your medicines and eat as you normally would. If you are unsure, please speak with your family doctor.
- You may shower or bathe about 24 hours after the procedure, once you feel ready to do so.



Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you notice:

- Your puncture site, or area around it, is:
 - Bleeding. If you are bleeding, apply pressure to the site right away.
 - Redder
 - Warm or cold to touch
 - Numb.
- Bruising or the bruising is getting worse
- You have a fever at or above 38.5°C (101.3°F).