Patient Guide:
Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) Procedure

Introduction

A Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) is a procedure for patients with symptomatic fibroids. This procedure is performed in the Medical Imaging department at Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital by one of our Interventional Radiologists:

- Dr. Raymond Chan
- Dr. Peter DeMaio
- Dr. Vikas Agarwal
- Dr. Vince Partap
- Dr. Jonathan Chung

For more information, please call the Interventional Radiology Department during working hours at 905-417-2000 extension 5975.
Procedure expectations

Prior to the procedure:
• Please pack a small bag with anything you may need for an overnight stay, keep valuables at home. There is a high probability that you will have your own private hospital room, although this cannot be guaranteed.

On the day of the procedure:
• In the morning, you can have light breakfast (e.g., coffee and toast) prior to your arrival at the hospital.
• You must be driven to the hospital and picked up from the hospital by a responsible adult.

Once you arrive at the hospital:
• Check in at Registration, then proceed to Peri-Operative Services for the procedure. Volunteers will guide to you to where you need to go.
• You will change into a hospital gown, then a nurse will insert an IV (small tube in your vein) and draw bloodwork if needed. You will also be given an anti-inflammatory medication.

During the procedure:
• You will have a urinary catheter inserted into the bladder.
• Medication will be given through your IV to help promote relaxation prior to procedure. A pain medication pump will be set-up and you will be told when to start using the pump to have medication administered.
• You may be in the procedure room for a few hours.

After the procedure:
• You will recover in the recovery area, then be moved to your hospital room. You will be released from the hospital the next day by the gynecologist on-call.
• There may be circumstances where your discharge from hospital is earlier or later than expected.

Recovery

Activities after the procedure:
• You will need one to two weeks off from work and other activities. Most patients recover after one week while some patients require more time. After two weeks, you may resume normal activities including sexual activity and exercise.
• After two weeks, you can be as active as you feel comfortable for the rest of your recovery period.
• You may or may not notice a large bruise or hard lump over the puncture site e.g. right hip joint (groin). This should go away in three (3) to four (4) weeks.

Typical symptoms after UFE:
• Mild nausea, vomiting right after your procedure and possibly for several days after.
• Pain or cramps. They will slowly get better in one (1) to two (2) weeks.
• Fever less than 38.5°C for three (3) days after the procedure.

Vaginal discharge and spotting:
• Your menstrual periods may be different for a few cycles after the procedure. You may miss a period, have lighter or heavier bleeding, or more cramps. This may last about six (6) to 12 months.
• Occasionally, some patients discharge fibroid tissue. If the vaginal discharge is thick or foul-smelling, you may be experiencing a problem with a fibroid passing through and need to see a gynecologist.
Medications

You will be given a prescription for medications to manage pain following your UFE procedure.

**Ibuprofen:**
- Anti-inflammatory
- Also known as Motrin
- Take the full 10-day course regardless of your level of pain. Take after eating or drinking.

**Oxycodone with acetaminophen or Codeine with acetaminophen:**
- Pain relief
- Also known as Percocet or Tylenol 3 (T3)
- Take this only for extra pain relief, if the Ibuprofen is not enough. Do not stop Ibuprofen.

**Docusate sodium:**
- Stool softener
- Also known as Colace
- Take this medication if you are taking Percocet or Tylenol 3, in order to prevent constipation
- Prune juice and bran may help

Possible Complications

**Fever and night sweats are expected, however:**
- If the fever lasts longer than three (3) days and is higher than 38.5°C,
- If you get a new fever more than a week after the procedure, or
- If you experience other unusual symptoms, the symptoms get worse, and/or the symptoms last longer than a week,
  - Please visit the nearest Emergency Department, your family doctor or call the Interventional Radiology Department during working hours at 905-417-2000 extension 5975

**Effect of UFE on menstrual cycle:**
- Most patients experience decreased bleeding with normal menstrual cycles after undergoing the UFE procedure.
- 2-15% of patients experience “premature menopause” and this tends to happen to patients who are nearing the age of menopause at the time of UFE.

Follow Up

A follow-up visit will be arranged with your gynecologist.

Keep track of your symptoms:
- Have your periods decreased in heaviness and length?
- Are you experiencing less pain due to fibroids?
- Do you feel less pressure on your bladder?
- Do you experience less bloating?

**Fibroids need time to shrink:**
- Some patients notice improvement within the first month after procedure while some may need up to a year to notice any changes
- Bleeding and other symptoms improve in 90% of patients, 12 months after the UFE procedure
- At three (3) months, the average reduction in fibroid size is about 40-70% and the overall reduction in uterus size is about 40-50%.
- Research suggests successfully treated fibroids will not grow again.
- In up to 10-20% of patients, UFE is not successful, and your gynecologist will explore other treatment options with you.