

Frequently Asked Questions

Is UFE experimental or investigational? UFE is not an "experimental" procedure that is known to be safe and effective that has been used for the past twenty years to treat emergency, life threatening bleeding.

Is UFE effective for multiple fibroids? Does it matter where the fibroids are located in the uterus? UFE treats all uterine fibroids at once regardless of size, number, or location. Pedunculated fibroids, that project into the uterine or abdominal cavity, may be an exception often treated with myomectomy (selective surgical fibroid removal). Virtually all fibroids respond to UFE . Average reduction of uterine volume following UFE is ~50% by 3-6 months.

Is the procedure painful? How will my pain be managed? Uterine artery embolization itself is not painful. Following the procedure almost all patients develop menstrual-type pelvic cramping that peaks within the first 6-10 hours. This pain is well controlled with a PCA (patient controlled analgesia) narcotic pain pump. By the next morning the cramping is significantly improved and manageable with oral medications, allowing discharge home.

What happens to the Embosphere particles? Embolization particles have been used for over 20 years without reports of adverse or allergic reactions. As the flow in the uterine artery becomes stagnant the particles become lodged in the fibroid. They do not dissolve or get absorbed and they cannot migrate to other parts of the body.

What happens to the fibroids following embolization? Once the fibroid blood supply is cut off the tissue dies, softens, and slowly shrinks as it is reabsorbed by the body. Eventually the fibroid is replaced by scar tissue. This tissue is no longer sensitive to hormonal changes during the menstrual cycle. On average, individual fibroids and the overall uterus shrink by ~50% within 3-6 months.

What happens to the rest of the uterus after embolization? We know from worldwide experience of more than 50,000 UFE cases that the uterus tolerates embolization very well. The particles preferentially enter the fibroids, as their blood vessels are larger than those that feed the healthy, normal uterus.

When can I expect to resume normal activities following UFE? The first 2-3 days following UFE can sometimes be difficult, with intermittent crampy pelvic pain and fatigue. This is caused by the breakdown of the fibroids and is a necessary step toward recovery. Most patients are back to their usual activities within a week.

When can I resume using tampons or engage in sexual activity? Sexual activity can be resumed usually in 7-10 days. For those who typically use tampons, another form of protection is advised for the first cycle after UFE.

Will fibroids recur after UFE? Once the fibroids are embolized they are dead do not regrow. After menopause there is usually no further growth of fibroids.

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EMBOLIZATION:
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