



# A minimally invasive treatment alternative to hysterectomy

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Uterine Fibroid Embolization  
(UFE)

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## What are uterine fibroids?

Uterine fibroids are benign (non-cancerous) tumors that grow on or within the lining of the uterus. They can range in size from as small as a grape to as large as a cantaloupe. Approximately 20-40% of women over age 35 have fibroids, and African-American women are at a higher risk for developing them.

Fibroids can result in pelvic pain or discomfort, urinary incontinence, frequent urination and heavy menstrual bleeding. The location and size of uterine fibroids can affect the severity of these symptoms and impact your quality of life. Fibroids are also hormonally sensitive, so the symptoms can be cyclical, just like with menstruation.



## Is UFE right for me?

You may be a candidate for uterine fibroid embolization if you:

- Are experiencing the symptoms of uterine fibroids such as heavy bleeding, constipation, or urinary frequency
- Are not pregnant
- Are seeking an alternative to hysterectomy (removal of the uterus)
- Wish to avoid surgery or are a poor candidate for surgery

Although some women have had successful pregnancies after UFE, the long-term effects aren't known about a woman's ability to become pregnant and may reduce your chances. As with all medical procedures, talk to your doctor if you have questions, and to help determine if UFE is right for you.





## Traditional Treatment Options

If your fibroids are not causing pain or other symptoms, treatment may not be necessary. Your OB/GYN might wish to monitor their growth during annual examinations. Hormone treatment medication is an option to relieve symptoms such as heavy menstrual bleeding and pelvic pressure, although medication cannot eliminate fibroids and often has side effects, such as weight gain, vaginal dryness and infertility.

Surgery, in the form of hysterectomy (removal of the entire uterus) or myomectomy (removal of fibroids from within the uterus) are options that are used today. However, surgery is expensive, requires a long and sometimes painful recovery and results in scarring. Myomectomy is a preferred treatment for women who wish to become pregnant, however fibroids may return in the future.

## Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE)

UFE is a less invasive, FDA-approved and highly effective approach for treating fibroids that does not require the uterus to be removed. It is performed by a specialized doctor called an interventional radiologist, who uses X-ray imaging to guide a catheter through the radial or femoral artery in the groin to the uterine artery. When the catheter has reached the location of the fibroids, the radiologist embolizes or “blocks” the blood vessels that feed the fibroid, depriving it of oxygenated blood. The fibroid then shrinks and the symptoms gradually disappear.

Clinical studies show that 93% of women reported improvements in their symptoms and the vast majority of women saw long-lasting relief from symptoms after five years.

UFE is performed in our comfortable and convenient outpatient center. The procedure takes less than an hour, and you may return home the same day.



## North Star Vascular & Interventional

The doctors at NSVI are pioneers in Interventional radiology. Hailing from some of the region's most prestigious healthcare and academic institutions, they were among the first (if not the first) to perform certain imaging-guided procedures in the United States.

NSVI offers the full range of minimally invasive vascular and interventional radiology services, including cancer treatment, at their state-of-the-art Minneapolis-based outpatient center. Cancer, spine fractures, uterine fibroids, knee osteoarthritis and vascular disease can be treated faster, less expensively and with greater precision and safety than ever before.

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