

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER  
RELIABLE WEBSITES WHERE I  
CAN GET MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT UFE?

[www.sirweb.org](http://www.sirweb.org)

[www.fibroidoptions.com](http://www.fibroidoptions.com) [www.NUFF.org](http://www.NUFF.org)

[www.4women.gov/faq/fibroids.htm](http://www.4women.gov/faq/fibroids.htm)

[www.mayoclinic.org/uterine-fibroids/uterine-artery-embolization.html](http://www.mayoclinic.org/uterine-fibroids/uterine-artery-embolization.html)

[www.drfibroid.com/about.htm](http://www.drfibroid.com/about.htm)



## UTERINE FIBROID EMBOLIZATION Frequently Asked Questions



DEPARTMENT OF  
INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
Hospital & Health Sciences System

Radiology

## WHAT IS UTERINE FIBROID EMBOLIZATION?

Uterine fibroid embolization, also called UFE, is a minimally invasive, uterus-sparing procedure that shrinks fibroids by cutting off their blood supply. A small catheter is inserted through a tiny nick in the upper thigh into the blood vessels near the fibroids and tiny Embosphere® Microspheres are injected through the catheter to block blood flow to the fibroids. On average the procedure takes about 45 minutes to an hour. UFE is performed by an interventional radiologist in a hospital or outpatient clinic. Most patients are able to go home within 23 hours after the procedure.

## WHAT ARE THE MICROSPHERES MADE OF? DO THEY STAY IN THE BODY? WILL THEY MOVE?

Embosphere Microspheres are made of a biocompatible material, which remain in the blood vessels near the fibroids permanently. The injected particles are too large to pass through the capillary bed of the uterus or fibroids; thus preventing them from going anywhere else in the body. The particles become incorporated into the remaining non-vibrant fibroid tissue.

## IS THIS PROCEDURE PAINFUL?

A local anesthetic will be administered in the upper thigh where the catheter is inserted. Patients do not feel pain during the procedure because UFE is performed under conscious sedation, which means you may be awake during the procedure but will not feel any pain. However, after the procedure, there may be some acute discomfort or cramping, which is managed with medications prescribed by the interventional radiologist to minimize this discomfort. The discomfort and cramping usually decreases and resolves over a few days.

## HOW LONG BEFORE I CAN RESUME MY NORMAL ACTIVITIES?

Generally women return to most of their normal activities in about 7 to 10 days. The interventional radiologist will provide you with written post-procedure instructions to ensure that you are comfortable in your recovery. Some women recover more quickly than others, and your personal results may vary.

## IS UFE BETTER THAN HYSTERECTOMY?

In recent clinical trials, UFE was found to have similar success in controlling fibroid symptoms as hysterectomy. In most cases, UFE patients were able to go home more quickly than hysterectomy patients. In addition, UFE patients returned to normal activity much faster than hysterectomy patients. UFE patients retain their uterus while minimizing the risks associated with surgery, such as increased risk of infection, adhesions, and bleeding complications.

## WILL MY INSURANCE COMPANY PAY FOR MY UFE?

Most insurance companies cover UFE as a treatment for symptomatic fibroids. The University of Illinois Hospital interventional radiologists can assist you in confirming your coverage for UFE.

## HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

By calling 312.413.3737, we can send you patient information and you can also schedule a consultation with our IR physicians.