



C-Gyn 23

Uterine Artery Embolisation for the treatment of Uterine Fibroids

Uterine artery embolisation (UAE) is a non-surgical treatment for symptomatic uterine fibroids. Over 100,000 cases of UAE have been performed worldwide and the procedure appears effective for reducing heavy menstrual bleeding associated with fibroids and in reducing fibroid volume.

UAE is associated with a shorter hospital stay, faster return to work and fewer adverse events than hysterectomy or myomectomy. Patient satisfaction at one year is similar. Complications include persistent vaginal discharge, fibroid expulsion, pain requiring hospitalization and analgesia and more rarely, septicaemia requiring emergency hysterectomy. The risk of hysterectomy for procedural complications or failure is around 3 percent. Twenty five percent of women subsequently undergo a further procedure for non-resolution of symptoms.

UAE can be considered for women with symptomatic fibroids >3cm who request intervention, particularly those women who wish to avoid hysterectomy or those with co-morbidities leading to increased surgical risk. UAE is contraindicated in narrow stalked subserosal or polypoid submucosal fibroids.

Patients should be assessed by a specialist gynaecologist to discuss all options for fibroid management. Women should be counseled about the potential risks of the procedure including the possible need for hysterectomy and approximately a 2% risk of ovarian failure.

Pregnancies following UAE should be considered high risk. Myomectomy remains the standard of care for women with symptomatic fibroids seeking fertility preservation.

References (selected)

1. [Edwards RD, Moss JG, Lumsden MA, Wu O, Murray LS, Twaddle S, Murray GD; Committee of the Randomized Trial of Embolization versus Surgical Treatment for Fibroids.](#) Uterine-artery embolization versus surgery for symptomatic uterine fibroids.
2. [N Engl J Med.](#) 2007 Jan 25;356(4):360-70.
3. [Gupta JK, Sinha AS, Lumsden MA, Hickey M.](#) Uterine artery embolization for symptomatic uterine fibroids. [Cochrane Database Syst Rev.](#) 2006 Jan 5;(1):CD005073.
4. <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/IPG94>

Links to College Publications

Heavy Menstrual Bleeding – A guide for women (RANZCOG patient education pamphlet)

Disclaimer

This College Statement is intended to provide general advice to Practitioners. The statement should never be relied on as a substitute for proper assessment with respect to the particular circumstances of each case and the needs of each patient.

The statement has been prepared having regard to general circumstances. It is the responsibility of each Practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this statement in each case. In particular, clinical management must always be responsive to the needs of the individual patient and the particular circumstances of each case.

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