

Fibroids

Common in women, fibroids are benign hard and soft tumors occurring in the female pelvis. They are the leading reason for hysterectomies (removal of the uterus. According to research, 80 percent of women will develop fibroids sometime in their lifetime. But, they are more common in African-American women (50 percent.)

Experts say the reason fibroids occur more in African-American women than in any other ethnic group is that these women are genetically predisposed to it, and they generally have a higher body fat percentage.

Ordinarily fibroids happen in women between the ages of 30 and 55. Many go unnoticed because there are no symptoms.

A not so well known procedure to treat fibroids is uterine fibroid embolization (UFE.) This uses a laser to cut off the blood supply to the tumors causing them to shrink.

"Surgery is not an absolute must. UFE replaces the need for surgery...It's one of the biggest breakthroughs for women. Many women don't know this is an option because they haven't been told by their physician. Only an experienced interventional radiologist can perform it and not the gynecologist" says Dr. John Lipman, medical director of the Center for Image Guided Medicine at Emory Adventist Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia.

Quick facts about UFE (uterine fibroid embolization):

- gynecologists are not trained to perform UFE, interventional radiologists are
- this procedure can treat any number and size of fibroid tumors
- 85 percent of women undergoing this procedure will not need any other treatment
- women can become pregnant after UFE

Interventional radiologists can be found through the following website:

Look for interventional radiologists: <http://www.sirweb.org>