

# After Uterine Artery Embolization

## Information for patients and families

Read this information to learn:

- how you can expect to feel
- what you can do when you get home
- common side-effects
- what problems to look out for
- who to call if you have any questions



You have had a Uterine Artery Embolization to remove fibroids from your uterus. Here is some information about what you can expect. There are also instructions to follow. This information can help answer some questions you may have and help you heal more quickly.

## How can I expect to feel?

During the first 2 or 3 days after you get home, you may:

- have cramps that come and go
- feel very tired
- feel nauseated (like throwing up). This feeling can come and go.
- have a fever (a body temperature up to 38 °C or 100.5 °F)

**These are all normal side effects of the procedure.** Your body is reacting to the embolization (blocking of arteries) of the fibroids. By the 4th or 5th day, you will start to feel better. Usually, these symptoms will not last longer than 7 days. The cramps may continue for a few days longer.



## What medicines can I take to help?

You have been given a prescription for medicine to help you with any pain and nausea you may have. Here are the medicines we usually prescribe:

What the medicine does	Name	Brand name
Anti-inflammatory	Ibuprofen	Motrin
Pain relief	Oxycodone	Percocet
Pain relief	Acetaminophen with Codeine	Tylenol with Codeine (Tylenol #3)
Anti-nausea	Dimenhydrinate	Gravol

Please follow the instructions for taking your prescription medicines.



## What can I eat?

When you get home, you can eat and drink as normal. You can continue to take the medicines you took before the procedure.



## When can I shower?

You can shower when you get home and each day as usual. You will have a bandage over your puncture (cut) site. For the first 2 days, take off the wet bandage and put on a dry, clean bandage after each shower. This will help you heal.



## What activities can I do?

You will feel tired, so slowly increase your activity over 3 to 4 days.

About 7 days after your procedure, you can start doing things like:

- your regular daily activities
- having sex or exercising
- going back to work

It is best **not** to travel for 2 weeks after the procedure (except for patients from out of the area who are returning home).

This is in case there are any problems after the procedure. **Don't** travel overseas for 1 month or until you have completely recovered.

## While you are taking the prescription pain medicines Percocet or Tylenol 3:

- **Don't** drive
- **Don't** use any machinery or kitchen appliances

These medicines can make you sleepy or have difficulty concentrating.

## What side-effects can I expect?

Here is more detailed information about different side-effects you may have after your procedure.

### Puncture site

The puncture site is where the tube was put in to do your embolization. You will have a Band-Aid over this puncture site. You can remove this Band-Aid after 2 days.

At your puncture site, you may notice:

- Some bruising that spreads out over several days. This is normal.
- A small knot under the skin, about the size of a large pea. This is part of the healing process. It will usually fade away in a few months.
- Continuing pain at the puncture site or in the upper thigh. This is usually because of nerve irritation at the site. If this bothers you, continue to take Motrin or Advil, which usually help.

It is possible for this pain to last for a few weeks or longer, but this is very rare. Bleeding from the puncture site is also very rare (much less than 1% risk). If this happens, please call us.

### Pelvic pain and/or cramps after your procedure

You should expect to have pelvic pain (area below your bellybutton) and cramping for a few days to 2 weeks. Usually, it lasts for about 3 to 4 days. It should get better each day.

Take your prescribed anti-inflammatory as directed for the full 7 days. You can also take your prescribed pain relief medicine to control your pain. You may take one or two tablets every 4 hours as needed for pain.

### Nausea

It is normal to have nausea after the procedure. You may take 50 milligrams of Gravol (dimenhydrinate) every 4 to 6 hours **when you need it**. If the Gravol doesn't help your nausea, please call us. We can give you something else.

## **Heartburn and constipation**

While you are taking Motrin, it is important to protect your stomach from irritation. Try and eat some food before you take the medicine and take it with a full glass of water. You can take an antacid if you need to.

A common side-effect of the prescribed pain medicine is constipation. Use Milk of Magnesia or drink warm glasses of prune juice. Drinking at least 8 glasses of water a day can also help.

## **Fever**

A mild fever is a common side-effect of the uterine artery embolization. About 1 in 4 patients will get a mild fever. It's a side-effect of your fibroids dying after embolization. You can take 2 pills of regular Tylenol or Motrin every 4 hours while you have a fever.

## **Menstrual periods**

You may notice a brown or reddish-brown vaginal discharge or spotting after the embolization. This is normal and may continue for a few weeks or until your first period. You may use a sanitary napkin (pad) until it stops. Don't use a tampon for 1 week after the procedure.

## **Vaginal discharge**

You may have a clear watery or bloody discharge for a few weeks or months after the procedure. This is normal and does not mean you have an infection.

## **Menstrual cycle (monthly period) changes**

Having the procedure may make you start a menstrual cycle (period) early or skip a period or two. This is normal.

If you had heavy bleeding caused by your fibroids, often your periods will be better right away. Don't be discouraged if it takes 2 or 3 cycles before they improve. Most patients will notice an improvement by their 3rd menstrual cycle.

## Hormonal Changes

You may have changes in your hormonal balance after the procedure.

This may cause you to have:

- mild depression (feeling sad) which goes away in a few days
- hot flashes (feeling very hot which comes and goes)
- night sweats, which may last for a few weeks

These symptoms should go away eventually.



**Call the Interventional Radiology office at 416 603 5800 ext. 6301 or your doctor if you have:**

- **bleeding or swelling at the puncture site that gets worse**

This is very rare. If it happens, go to the nearest emergency department. While you wait for help, put a clean cloth over your site and apply pressure. This will help slow any bleeding.

- **pelvic pain or fever that doesn't go away**

Pain and fever (less than 38 °C) are common for 3 to 5 days after the procedure. Call our office or clinical nurse coordinator if:

- your pain lasts longer than a week or gets worse
- you get a fever (above 38 °C) for longer than a week
- you get a new fever more than a week after the procedure

- **vaginal discharge that is thick or smells bad**

This may mean you have an infection or a problem with a fibroid passing through. You may need to see a gynecologist.



## **When will I have my follow-up appointment?**

You will have a few follow-up appointments after your procedure. These appointments will check how well the procedure worked. These appointments will include:

### **3 months after your procedure:**

- an MRI and ultrasound of your uterus
- a follow-up visit with the radiologist

### **6 months after your procedure:**

- an ultrasound
- a follow-up visit with the radiologist

### **About 1 year after your procedure:**

- a follow-up visit with the radiologist
- an ultrasound (if needed)

**You should continue your normal appointments with your gynecologist.**

If you have questions between your regular visits, please call our office or the **Clinical Nurse Coordinator at 416 603 5800 extension 6301**

## **Who can I call if I have any questions?**

If you have any medical questions or questions between your regular visits, please call:

Clinical Nurse Coordinator  
Phone: 416 603 5800 extension 6301

For clinical appointment booking and/or rescheduling, please call:

VIR Administrative Assistant  
Phone: 416 603 6276

**If you have medical concerns that cannot wait until regular business hours and you are not sure if you should go the Emergency Department, call 416 603 5800 ext. 3155 or 416 340 4800 ext. 3155 and ask for Interventional Radiologist Fellow on-call.**

### **Interventional Radiologists:**

Dr. M. Simons

Dr. S. Mafeld

Dr. K. Tan

Dr. D. Rajan

Dr. A. Jaber

Dr. G. Oreopoulos



### **Have feedback about this document?**

Please fill out our survey. Use this link: [bit.ly/uhn-pe](https://bit.ly/uhn-pe)

Visit [www.uhnpatienteducation.ca](http://www.uhnpatienteducation.ca) for more health information. Contact [pfep@uhn.ca](mailto:pfep@uhn.ca) to request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats.

© 2020 University Health Network. All rights reserved. Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.