

Fibroids

Fibroids are common benign lumps made up of uterine cell tissue. They can grow around and inside a woman's uterus with around 80% of women experiencing it at least once. They are not harmful to overall health, although they have the potential to delay conception.

Fibroids may be in the uterine wall (intramural fibroids), on the outer surface of the uterus (subserosal fibroids), or protruding into the cavity of the uterus (submucosal fibroids).

Symptoms & diagnosis

Some symptoms that may indicate the presence of fibroids include:

- Heavy and painful periods
- Lower back pain
- Pelvic pain
- Iron deficiency

Fibroids can be diagnosed by a simple ultrasound.

Effect on fertility

The effects of fibroids on fertility depend on the location and size of the fibroids in the uterus, which ultimately determines whether they need to be removed.

If the fibroid/s are located on the inside of the uterus distorting, obstructing the uterine cavity or blocking the fallopian tubes, they are likely to be affecting fertility by interfering with implantation in which case most specialists would recommend they be removed if you are having trouble conceiving.

However, if the fibroid/s does not affect the lining of the uterus, they have much less effect on a woman's fertility and would not require treatment.

In extreme cases fibroids can lead to recurrent miscarriage or premature labour.

Treatment

Fibroids can generally be removed through a keyhole surgical procedure. Removal of small fibroids located entirely within the uterine cavity is normally straightforward and can be done as a day surgery through a hysteroscopy (where a thin telescope is inserted into the uterus via the vagina), or a laparoscopy (a keyhole operation performed through a small incision in the navel).

