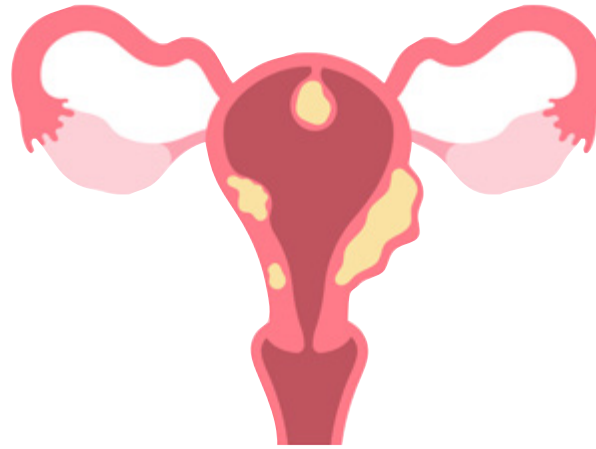


# Surgical treatment of uterine fibroids



## Uterine fibroids

Fibroids are benign (non-cancerous) growths that can form in and around your uterus. They are common, affecting seven out of ten women aged 20 and over and are usually present during reproductive age. The size and growth can vary from woman to woman but are often less than one inch to a few inches in diameter. In most cases, the fibroids are small and don't require any treatment.

The growth of fibroids can be erratic. Some will grow slowly, whilst others may have a sudden growth spurt. The growth rate is down to the female hormone oestrogen

## What causes fibroids?

Whilst it's unclear what causes fibroids, an imbalance in female sex hormones and genetics may play a role. Other factors that may also have an impact include



obesity



a diet heavy in red meat



stress caused by a major life event

## What are the symptoms?

Often, fibroids don't show any symptoms at all and don't require any treatment. When symptoms do occur, they depend on several factors, such as size and location. They can cause the following.

- Heavy and painful periods.
- Spotting between periods.
- Difficulty passing urine or bowel movements.
- More frequent urination and a sense of urgency.
- Bloating of the abdomen.
- Discomfort during sexual intercourse.
- Miscarriage during the first and second trimesters.
- Infertility.

If you have a large fibroid, you may experience swelling and pressure in the lower abdomen, lower back, bladder, or bowel.

Women often find that once treated, a lot of their symptoms disappear.

## IMPORTANT

If you experience any of the above symptoms, speak to your doctor and seek medical advice.

## Diagnosis of uterine fibroids

In the instance that the fibroids begin to show the symptoms mentioned above, your doctor will carry out the following tests and examinations to rule out other possible issues, such as cysts and polyps.

During diagnosis, you may undergo the following. A physical and pelvic examination.

- An ultrasound or a vaginal probe scan of the uterus.
- A sonohysterogram in which your doctor will fill your uterus with fluid to get an enhanced image allowing for a clear view.
- A uterine biopsy to take a small sample of your uterine tissue for examination.
- A CT scan and/or MRI.
- Blood tests to check for conditions such as anemia.

After diagnosis, your doctor will let you know if you need treatment and the best solution based on your circumstances.

## PLEASE NOTE:

**THE DECISION TO HAVE TREATMENT IS ENTIRELY YOURS. YOU SHOULD MAKE IT AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF ALL THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVE.**

## IMPORTANT

**If your doctor recommends surgery and you decide to go ahead with the procedure, you will need to sign a consent form.**

**Before signing, read the form carefully, ensure you understand everything and ask your doctor questions if you are unsure about anything.**

## Preparing for surgery

- You will also need to let your doctor know of
- Your full medical history.
- Any health problems you may have.
- Any allergies and reactions you might have to anaesthetics, antibiotics, or other drugs.
- Prolonged bleeding or bruising you may have had after an injury.
- Recent or current infections.
- Recent or long-term illness you may be suffering from.
- Any previous surgery you've had.
- Any medication you may be taking, including over-the-counter and prescribed (including, aspirin, cough syrups, and other blood thinners).

## Types of fibroid surgery

There are two types of fibroid procedures.

1. **Myomectomy:** there are two ways of doing a myomectomy - via an abdominal/laparoscopy or hysteroscopic resection of the fibroid. This is performed by inserting a laparoscope into the uterus through the cervix via robotic procedures or abdominal surgery, allowing the uterus to stay in place and preserving fertility.
2. **Hysterectomy:** this surgery involves the removal of the uterus but is often not necessary. Whilst this surgery offers a permanent cure for fibroids, we only suggest it when all other treatments fail. Doctors recommend a hysterectomy only for women who have completed their families.

## Next Steps

More information  
Contact our advice team on  
02 4225 1999

Diagnosis and treatment  
Contact us to book an appointment  
with Dr Kothari  
02 4225 1999

The type of surgery you will undergo will depend on:

- The size of your fibroids,
- The number of fibroids you have,
- Where the fibroids are located, and
- If you want to have children in the future.

Depending on your medical history, your doctor will perform the surgery under general, local, spinal, or epidural anaesthetic. Your anaesthetist will explain to you which is best for you and will answer any questions you may have.

## Recovering after fibroid surgery

Like most surgeries, the recovery time and how you recover post-surgery will depend on the type of surgery you have undergone and will vary from woman to woman.

**Laparotomy:** you may need to stay in the hospital for one to several days, and recovery may take up to six weeks. We advise that you avoid strenuous and vigorous exercise and heavy lifting.

**Laparoscopic myomectomy:** as this is a minor surgery, your doctor may perform it as an out patient or day surgery, so you will not need to remain in the hospital post-surgery. You may experience the following a few days after the surgery:

- tiredness,
- aches and pains,
- discomfort near the site of the incision,
- pain in one or both of the shoulders that extends to the neck,
- cramps like period cramps, and
- abdominal bloating.

**Hysteroscopic myomectomy:** you may experience period-like cramps and notice a bloody discharge from the vagina for a couple of weeks.

**Hysterectomy:** it can take up to 12 weeks to recover, and we advise that you avoid it for at least six weeks to allow your cervix to heal. You will also notice a bloody discharge from your vagina - this is normal for the first week.

## IMPORTANT

- **After a general anaesthetic, avoid driving for 24 hours. We advise that you arrange for someone to pick you up after your surgery.**
- **Your doctor will provide you with instructions for showering and bathing post-surgery.**
- **To avoid infection, we suggest you use sanitary pads instead of tampons when experiencing bloody discharge.**
- **After a laparotomy, non-dissolvable stitches will be removed seven to ten days after surgery at your follow-up appointment.**

## Treatment costs

The costs will vary from patient to patient, depending on the level of treatment and care required. You can discuss the exact fee structure and what you can claim on Medicare and private health insurance with your doctor before undergoing any form of surgery.

Wollongong Day Surgery  
Suite 5, Level 3, 354-358 Crown Street  
Wollongong, NSW 2500

PH. 02 4225 1999  
wollongongobgy.com.au  
admin@wollongongObGy.com.au