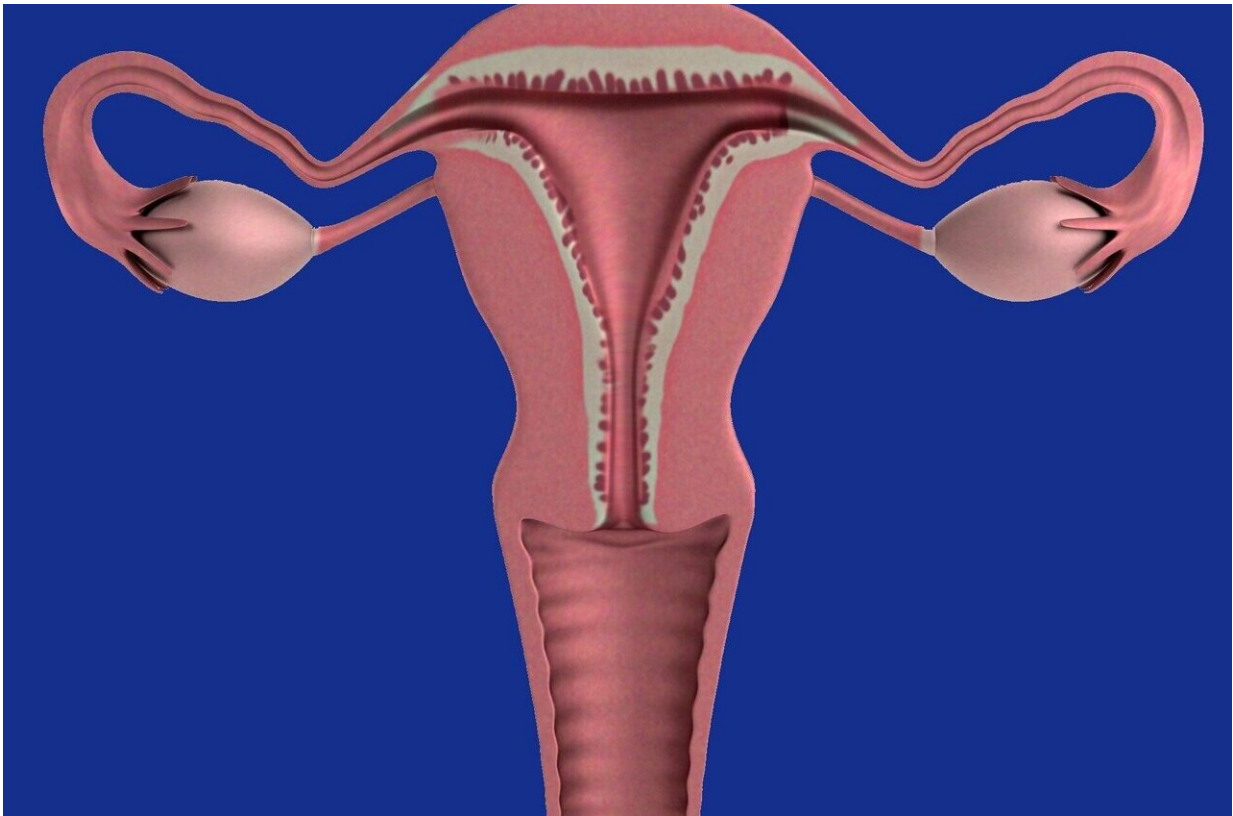


Mayo Clinic Minute: Know your uterine fibroid treatment options

March 1 2022, by Deb Balzer



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Uterine fibroids are noncancerous tumors that grow in the wall of the uterus. Up to 80% of those who are born with a uterus may experience these benign masses of muscle in their uterus.

While fibroids are usually benign, they can cause reproductive issues, such as infertility or pregnancy loss, difficult menstrual periods, and pain.

Dr. Michelle Louie, a Mayo Clinic gynecologic surgeon and fibroid specialist, says it is important to know about the different approaches to treating fibroids so you can be sure you are given all the options to figure out the best one for you.

They are not uncommon and can be harmless, but for some, [uterine fibroids](#) can affect quality of life.

"Fibroids can cause predominantly two groups of symptoms. One is bleeding symptoms, where the person experiences very heavy or prolonged periods," says Dr. Louie.

"The second category of symptoms most commonly experienced by people with fibroids are called 'bulk symptoms,' Dr. Louie says. "That's just when fibroids get so large that they begin to exert a lot of pressure or heaviness in the pelvis, or they can press on surrounding organs like the bladder or the colon."

Treatment can depend on the size and the location of the fibroids. Nonsurgical options may include monitoring the fibroids if they don't cause bothersome symptoms, or medications to shrink the fibroids.

"The most traditional treatment option is a surgery called a myomectomy. It's done by your gynecologist or a fibroid specialist. It's a procedure where we cut into the [uterus](#) to remove the fibroid and then sew the uterus back up so that it's preserved for future pregnancy," she says.

Newer minimally invasive options include radio frequency fibroid

ablation and uterine fibroid embolization that allow most patients to go home the same day with shorter recovery times. A variety of surgical [options](#) are available, but the No. 1 message Dr. Louie wants patients to know is: "Help is available, and we can help them achieve a higher quality of life. They don't have to suffer from fibroid-related symptoms."

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