

Uterine fibroids, also known as leiomyomas, are noncancerous growths that develop in the uterus. They are the most common type of benign tumours in those assigned female at birth in their reproductive age.

Symptoms:

- **Heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding:** Women with uterine fibroids often experience heavy menstrual bleeding, which may be accompanied by clots. This can lead to anemia and fatigue.
- **Pelvic pain or pressure:** Fibroids can cause discomfort or pain in the pelvic region. Some women may also feel a sense of pressure or fullness in the lower abdomen.
- **Frequent urination:** Large fibroids can press against the bladder, causing increased frequency of urination or a sensation of needing to urinate urgently.
- **Constipation or bloating:** Fibroids located near the bowel can result in constipation or bloating.
- **Pain during sexual intercourse:** Fibroids may cause pain or discomfort during sexual intercourse.
- **Enlarged abdomen:** In some cases, fibroids can cause the abdomen to appear enlarged or distended.

Main Characteristics:

- **Location and size:** Uterine fibroids can develop within the uterine walls (intramural fibroids), on the outer surface of the uterus (subserosal fibroids), or within the uterine cavity (submucosal fibroids). They can range in size from tiny seedlings to large masses that distort the shape of the uterus.
- **Hormonal influence:** Estrogen and progesterone, in those assigned female at-birth reproductive hormones, appear to play a role in the growth of fibroids. They tend to develop and enlarge during the reproductive years when hormone levels are higher and often shrink or stabilize after menopause when hormone levels decrease.
- **Common occurrence:** Uterine fibroids are quite common, with around 70-80% of those assigned female at birth, developing them by the age of 50. However, not all fibroids cause symptoms or require treatment.
- **Impact on fertility and pregnancy:** Depending on their size and location, fibroids can interfere with fertility or increase the risk of complications during pregnancy, such as miscarriage, preterm birth, or fetal malposition. However, many women with fibroids conceive and carry pregnancies to term without issues.

Treatment options: Treatment for uterine fibroids depends on factors such as the severity of symptoms, the size and location of the fibroids, and the person's desire for future fertility. Options may include medication, minimally invasive procedures to remove or shrink the fibroids, or, in severe cases, surgical removal of the uterus (hysterectomy).

If you suspect you have uterine fibroids or are experiencing any symptoms associated with them, it is important to consult a healthcare professional. They can provide an accurate diagnosis and discuss appropriate treatment options tailored to your specific needs.