Uterine Fibroid Embolization

What is uterine fibroid embolization?
Uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) is a minimally invasive procedure to treat fibroids that have grown on the uterus. It is also known as uterine artery embolization.

How is UFE performed?
You will arrive early for your procedure so that a nurse can check you in and you can speak with a doctor to make sure all of your questions are answered. Once you are ready, the nurse will start an IV so that he/she can give you medications to be sure you are comfortable and pain free. The area over the vessel in the groin will be sterilized and the doctor will numb the area with local anesthetic. The doctor then uses real-time x-ray and ultrasound to guide a thin tube (catheter) into the artery. X-ray dye, or contrast, is then injected to make the blood vessels visible on x-ray and find the fibroid’s blood supply. Sometimes contrast can cause feelings like flushing or warmth and this is considered a normal side effect. You may be asked to hold your breath for 5-15 seconds while the doctor takes the pictures. Once the doctor finds the blood vessels to the fibroids, small particles are injected to block blood flow. Once blood flow is blocked, the fibroids will shrink over time. The catheter will be removed from the vessel in the groin. Once the procedure is complete, you will lie flat in bed for several hours after the procedure. This helps prevent bleeding from the site where the doctor worked. Most patients stay overnight in the hospital for pain management and can go home the very next day.

Pre-Procedure Checklist
- You will need to pre-register before your appointment by calling 540-224-5200.
- Check in 1 hour and 30 minutes prior to your appointment time in the main lobby of Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital.
- You may not eat or drink after midnight the night before your procedure.
- You may take important medications (blood pressure, heart, etc) with a small sip of water.
- Please dress comfortably and leave your valuables at home.
- You need a responsible adult to drive you home.
- Bring a list of your medications with you for the nurse to review.
- If you are taking medications that thin your blood, you will need to consult the department for specific recommendations to decrease the risk of bleeding. You may call us at 540-981-7083 to speak with a nurse.
Immediately following your procedure

- No driving, operating heavy machinery, or making any important decisions for 24 hours.
- Light activity only for 24 hours after your procedure. Do not lift anything over 10 pounds.
- You may gradually resume your normal activity over the next few days.
- Have a responsible adult stay with you overnight.
- Start with light food. If you have no problems, you may progress to a regular diet.
- Drink plenty of liquids for the next 2 days to help your body clear the IV contrast that was used for your procedure.
- You may remove the bandage after 48 hours and shower normally at that time.
- No creams, lotions or ointments should be applied to the site.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages and smoking or being around those who are smoking today.

What to report to your doctor

- If you become weak, faint, or dizzy
- If you develop severe pain
- Fevers greater than 101° F or chills
- If you have numbness or a change in color in your arm or leg
- Bleeding or swelling at the site
  - If you experience bleeding, immediately hold firm pressure over the site and have someone call 911.

For additional information, please visit:
http://www.sirweb.org/patients/uterine-fibroids/

References:
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