

## **UTERINE FIBROIDS**

Fibroids are the most common benign (non-cancerous) growth in the female pelvis, and are present in approximately 30% of women over age 30. They are a common cause of heavy or irregular uterine bleeding, as well as pelvic pain. They are also associated with infertility and pregnancy loss. Some patients have no symptoms from their fibroids.

Fibroids may be diagnosed by pelvic examination, and can usually be confirmed with pelvic ultrasound. Occasionally, they are diagnosed by special tests such as a hysterosalpingogram(HSG), or through a minor surgical procedure called hysteroscopy.

Small fibroids that cause no symptoms may not need treatment, but need to be followed with regular office exams. Larger, symptomatic fibroids may require treatment. Options for treatment may include one of the following:

- Medications called GnRH agonists-these drugs decrease estrogen levels and may cause the fibroids to shrink temporarily.
- Myomectomy- surgical excision of the fibroids from the wall of the uterus. Certain patients may be candidates for “resection” myomectomy (<http://www.gynecare.com>) which can be done as an outpatient procedure.
- Fibroid embolization, involving blocking the blood supply to the fibroid, causing it to shrink.
- Hysterectomy-the surgical removal of the uterus, which may be necessary for very large, rapidly growing, or multiple fibroids.