

What Women Need To Know: Alternative Option For Treating Uterine Fibroids

(NAPSA)—More than 25 million American women have a medical condition that can adversely impact their lives—uterine fibroids.

Uterine fibroids are common, benign, noncancerous tumors that grow on or within the muscle tissue of the uterus. While some women may have fibroids and never experience symptoms, fibroids can have a significant effect on many women's quality of life. Every woman should see a physician if she suspects that she has uterine fibroids. Common symptoms may include:

- Heavy bleeding
- Pelvic discomfort
- Bloating abdomen
- Anemia
- Painful intercourse
- Leg pain
- Pressure on other organs.

Fibroids are typically diagnosed through a pelvic exam or an ultrasound done by a gynecologist.

While hysterectomy still remains the primary treatment for fibroids, uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) is a viable nonsurgical alternative to hysterectomy that provides relief of major symptoms and a relatively quick recovery time.

A recent national survey from the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC) reveals that more women with symptomatic uterine fibroids are discussing UFE with their medical professional. In fact, 40 percent of those surveyed were told about UFE by their physician, who described it as a safe, effective alternative treatment to hysterectomy.

"This survey data tells us more about the lives of women who have uterine fibroids, and it is clear that progress has been made to educate women about the treatment alternatives available," said Elizabeth Battaglini Cahill, RN, executive vice president of NWHRC. "However, there is still plenty of opportunity to continue to increase the awareness of less-invasive therapies and for women to discuss those therapies with



Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) is discussed in 40 percent of doctor-patient exchanges.

their physician before making a treatment decision."

Approximately 6 million American women have symptoms severe enough to require medical treatment. In fact, according to the survey results, just over a third of employed women stated that they miss at least one day of work a month due to their fibroid symptoms, and about half of the employed women in this survey miss more than two to three days of work per month while experiencing fibroid symptoms.

Additional survey findings include:

- Over 40 percent of women surveyed discussed UFE with their medical professional, and of those, about 35 percent chose UFE as their treatment for their fibroid condition.

- About three in eight patients (38 percent) say that their fibroid condition "severely" or "substantially" limits their recreational/athletic activities and their sex life.

- The vast majority (60 percent) of women who underwent UFE or uterine artery embolization (UAE) procedures experienced less than two weeks of recovery—the shortest time frame of any of the three procedural options that also included myomectomy and hysterectomy.

For more information, visit www.ask4UFE.com and the Web site www.healthywomen.org.