

# FAST FACTS: FIBROIDS

## WHAT THEY ARE

Benign (noncancerous) growths within the wall of the uterus. They are also called uterine leiomyomas.

## WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE

Fibroids can grow as a single growth or in groups. Their size can vary from small, like an apple seed, to even larger than a grapefruit.

## CAUSE

No one knows exactly what causes fibroids. Fibroids often run in families.

## SYMPTOMS

Most fibroids do not cause any symptoms. If symptoms are present they may be:

- heavy bleeding or painful periods
- spotting or bleeding between periods
- feeling of fullness in the pelvic area (lower abdomen)
- frequent urination
- pain during sex
- lower back pain
- reproductive problems such as not being able to get pregnant, having more than one miscarriage, or having early onset of labor during pregnancy

## TESTS

- Regular pelvic exam
- Ultrasound — a test that creates a “picture” of the inside of your body to see if you have fibroids
- Laparoscopy — surgery in which your doctor inserts a small tube with a light and a camera inside your abdomen to look for any fibroids
- Hysteroscopy — surgery in which your doctor inserts a long tube with a camera into the vagina and directly into the uterus to look for any fibroids

## TREATMENT

- Pain medication
- Drugs that may decrease the size of the fibroids or that stop or slow the growth of fibroids
- Surgery
- Shrinking the fibroids by placing a freezing agent on them
- Cutting off the blood supply to the uterus and the fibroids so they shrink (uterine artery embolization)

## ARE FIBROIDS CANCER OR COULD THEY BECOME CANCEROUS?

Although fibroids are sometimes called tumors, they are benign and do not cause cancer.

*Call the Allegan Pelvic Wellness Center to schedule an initial consultation at (269) 686-4355.*

