Recovery after fibroid embolisation

This leaflet explains more about returning to your everyday activities after your fibroid embolisation. If you have any questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

When can you leave hospital?
After a successful fibroid embolisation and overnight stay in the hospital, you should be able to go home the day after the procedure.

You might experience pelvic cramps (cramps in your stomach) for several days after the procedure, and possibly mild nausea (feeling sick) and low-grade fever as well. The cramps are most severe during the first day after the procedure and will improve rapidly over the next few days. While in the hospital, you will be given strong painkillers to control the pain.

What can you do when you go home?
- Eat and drink as normal.
- Continue with your normal medication as usual but if you take any diabetes medicines containing metformin, please do not take them for the next two days after your procedure.
- Keep a regular check on the puncture site where you had the procedure. To give the puncture site time to heal, do not drive or do any form of demanding exercise for 48 hours after the procedure.

Once you are home, you may have pain for up to 2 weeks (similar to bad period pain) but this can usually be controlled with oral analgesics (painkillers taken by mouth) that we will give you to take home. You may feel drained and tired for a week or so.

You may notice some bruising at the puncture site. Bleeding or swelling is rare but if it does happen, lie down and apply pressure directly on the site for 10 minutes. If the bleeding or swelling continues after this time go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E), taking this leaflet with you.

When can you go back to work?
We usually recommend taking up to 2 weeks off work but this depends on what your work is, how flexible your work can be and how you feel.

You may feel tired and we advise you to rest for 1-2 weeks depending on your recovery. You can then resume your usual activities.
What can you expect?
You will have vaginal discharge that can be brown, bloody, yellow or mucus-like. This is the breakdown product of the fibroids. This discharge lasts for about 2 weeks but can last longer.

If the discharge becomes **excessively smelly** and you also have pain or a temperature you should contact the Interventional Radiology Department, **tel: 020 7188 5525 / 5477**, your gynaecologist or GP as soon as possible.

**Are there any long-term symptoms you should be aware of?**
You may pass out bits of fibroids for several months after the procedure. It depends on the overall size and location of the fibroids and occurs when fibroid tissue located near the lining of the uterus shrinks and partially detaches. The bits of fibroid vary in size and will look like bits of grey body tissue. This is normal and you do not need to do anything.

Very rarely, if a larger fibroid is passed, you may need to see your gynaecologist who can help with its removal. You may experience this as a painless passage of a fleshy mass from your vagina.

**When can you resume sexual intimacy?**
We recommend that you **avoid** penetrative sex for at least **4 weeks** after the procedure and that you do not become pregnant for **6 months**, and use contraception as appropriate – your GP can give you advice on this. After 4 weeks, you can have sex as long as you are not experiencing pain or offensive discharge.

**Will you have a follow-up appointment?**
You will have a follow-up with your gynaecologist or GP. It is important if you have any concerns as detailed above, you should contact your gynaecologist or a member of their team for advice.

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**Contact us**
If you have any questions or concerns about your fibroid embolisation, please contact the interventional radiology receptionist who will arrange for the interventional radiologist (doctor who does the embolization) to call you back in working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, Guy’s Hospital, **tel: 020 7188 5576 / 5525**, St Thomas’ Hospital, **tel: 020 7188 5479**

If you need urgent medical attention, call the Emergency Gynaecology Unit, **tel: 020 7188 0864**, Monday to Friday, 8.30am-7pm, weekends 9.30am-3.15pm. Outside of these hours, contact your GP, NHS 111 or go to your nearest Emergency Department.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web**: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

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**NHS 111**
Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day, **tel: 111**