



Fibroids and HRT

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Fibroids, also known as uterine leiomyomas, are common benign (noncancerous) growths of the uterus. Depending on the size, and location i.e. whether they encroach on the cavity of the uterus, they can cause heavy bleeding. If they are very large then they can cause physical discomfort by pressing on other organs such as the bladder and bowel. Fibroids are sensitive to hormonal fluctuations, particularly oestrogen and progesterone, which can influence their size and the symptoms they produce.

Oestrogen, the hormone that we are aiming to replace in menopausal women by giving HRT, can promote the growth of fibroids. This does not mean that women with fibroids cannot take HRT, but there needs to be consideration about combining oestrogen with the correct type and dose of progesterone in order to try and avoid any worsening of bleeding or discomfort.

Women will need an individualized assessment as everyone's situation is unique. Factors such as the size, location, and symptoms associated with fibroids, as well as the severity of menopausal symptoms, should be carefully evaluated.

It may be necessary to use a type of progesterone that is particularly good at suppressing bleeding, possibly in a higher dose than normal, or for a longer part of each monthly cycle. The Mirena IUS (coil) or similar device may be an ideal option but potential distortion of the uterine cavity may make correct placement challenging in some cases.

If HRT is prescribed, regular monitoring is essential and this may include imaging studies to assess the size of fibroids. It may be necessary to consider other non-hormonal treatments for menopausal symptoms if HRT is not suitable.

As the situation is often more complex it is advisable to see a menopause specialist who can talk you through all the best options and provide the best individualised care.

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