

The Smart/Innovative Woman's Guide to Managing Fibroids Without Hysterectomy – What your doctor won't tell you.

Answer this riddle: What is pink, round, comes in all sizes and affects women of all ethnic groups?

If you answered fibroids, you are correct. But unlike the cute description given above, fibroids are known to be one of, if not the most disruptive health conditions experienced by women. The Mayo Clinic reports that uterine fibroids affect 75-80 percent of all women. Health care costs associated with fibroids amount to billions of dollars, including hospitalizations for transfusions secondary to extreme bleeding and the resultant severe anemia.

Add to this the lost days of work, lost wages, sexual dysfunction, marital discord and the lifestyle disruption secondary to its unpredictable symptoms of bleeding and pain, and you can easily see how fibroids can be seen as enemy number one.

Data from the National Institute of Health indicate that this condition accounts for more than 200,000 of the 600,000 hysterectomies done annually in the United States.

Many of those obtaining hysterectomies are finally happy to be forever rid of the nagging unpredictability of these tumors. However, many occur in women who are ill-informed, ill-prepared, and worst of all, many of whom feel intimidated into accepting an irreversible and definitive treatment.

The symptoms and conditions that would have led to a hysterectomy in the past can, in most cases, with today's medical advances, be treated easily in a doctor's office or in short out-patient procedures.

The goal at Innovative Women's HealthCare Solutions is to educate, inform and thus empower our patients who we call "partners in health." All patients with fibroids have extensive counseling regarding their treatment options. They are given take-home material and information as to how to access links to fibroid education on our website.

Our Ten-Step Anti-Hysterectomy options include medical therapies, endometrial ablation (a five-minute, in-office procedure for heavy menstrual bleeding) and myosure (a hysteroscopic myomectomy through the cervix, without incisions), among others. They are also encouraged to consult with an interventional



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Patient *centered*. Patient *driven*. Patient *empowered*.



radiologist to see if they are a candidate for UFE (uterine fibroid embolization).

The number of fibroids, their location, the patient's symptom profile, their age, desire for future childbearing and most importantly, what treatment they desire should all be taken into account. It is important to remember: fibroids are benign in over 99 percent of cases, so patient input and desires should play a major role in treatment.

In summary, find a provider who will share ALL of the options, and one that is experienced in all of the medical and surgical treatment options. Make sure your questions are answered and your desired treatment option given careful consideration. This will result in the most satisfactory outcome.



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Melinda Miller Thrasher is a native of NYC and attended Cornell University, Mt. Sinai and NYU for her residency training. Her expertise includes fibroids and minimally invasive surgical procedures to treat fibroids. She is on staff at Emory University Hospital and Piedmont Hospital. Dr. Miller-Thrasher has been selected as one of Atlanta's Top Doctors each year since 2009 as listed in *Atlanta Magazine*, One of the Gynecologists You Love (*Essence Magazine*) and she is a Patients' Choice Award recipient. She is also a member of the WebMD medical review board. She has an office in the Smyrna/Vinings area, Buckhead and soon to open in Midtown. Her new book, "The Innovative Women's Guide to Fibroids," will be available late summer 2014.

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