

How to Shrink Fibroids Naturally

Expert
Reviewed

Three Methods: [Trying Natural Methods](#) [Understanding Other Treatment Options](#) [Understanding Fibroids](#)

Uterine fibroids, or leiomyomata, are non-cancerous tumors that form on the uterus.^[1] At some point in their lives, up to 70% of women will develop fibroids.^[2] Normally, fibroids do not cause any symptoms. But sometimes they can cause pain and heavy bleeding. If fibroids are causing pain or other symptoms, consult your doctor before attempting to shrink fibroids naturally.

Method
1

Trying Natural Methods

1 The "watch and wait" method. Doctors used to take a proactive approach to treating fibroids with unnecessary, invasive procedures. Now, however, most doctors advise "watchful waiting" when small fibroids don't cause significant problems such as abnormal bleeding, infertility, or painful periods. Over time, many fibroids start shrinking on their own.^[3]

- Fibroids tend to form at reproductive age, grow larger with pregnancy, and shrink after menopause. Waiting several years is often preferable to taking drugs which have bad side effects or having a surgical procedure done.
- Most fibroids almost never become cancerous, so it's fine to leave them in the body as long as they aren't causing other issues. Even if you have a fibroid in your abdominal area that you can actually feel when you press it - or even see when you look closely - you might not want to have it removed unless it's absolutely necessary.
- If you want to try the watch and wait method, see a doctor first and make sure that what you have is definitely fibroids. Other types of growths need immediate medical intervention.

2 Drink green tea or use green tea extract. In clinical trials, green tea extract (epigallocatechin gallate, or EGCG) reduced the severity of fibroid symptoms. Women who took green tea extract experienced fewer severe symptoms, and fibroid size shrank by an average of 32.6%.^{[4][5]}

- It is important to note that these studies were quite small and there are no randomized trials studying the efficacy of the treatment.
- Women who took green tea extract for fibroids did not experience any severe side effects. However, if you are sensitive to caffeine, monitor your green tea consumption. Green tea contains caffeine which can cause irritability, nervousness, and nausea.^[6]
- Studies have shown that green tea reduces the growth of fibroids in rats. Green tea may prevent the growth of new fibroids, although the research is still inconclusive.^{[7][8]}

3 Ask your doctor about Chinese medicine. A few studies have suggested that Chinese herbal medicine may shrink fibroids and relieve fibroid symptoms. Because some herbs may interact with medication or other medical conditions, consult your doctor before taking any herbal remedies.^[9]

- Beware that Chinese medicinal approaches are not subjected to the randomized controlled trials that FDA-approved medications go through. There may also be inconsistency with dosing, which can alter efficacy and risks significantly.
- One study found that the herbal remedy *Kuei-chih-fu-ling-wan* reduced fibroid size in about 60% of the study participants.^[10]
- Several clinical trials have shown that *Tripterygium wilfordii* extract, or *léi gōng téng* 雷公藤, can shrink fibroids as well as or better than the drug mifepristone.^[11]
- *Guizhi Fuling* formula 桂枝茯苓丸 (Ramulus Cinnamomi, Poria, Semen Persicae, Radix Paeoniae Rubra or Radix Paeoniae Alba, and Cortex Moutan) and mifepristone together are also effective at reducing fibroid size.^[12] *Guizhi Fulin* and mifepristone together are more effective than either separately.^[13]

4 Work with a physical therapist. One study found that physical therapy may be effective at shrinking fibroids and relieving fibroid symptoms for some women. Speak with your physician to determine whether physical therapy may work for you.^{[14][15]}

- Be aware that physical therapy may address the pain or symptoms but not the underlying problem of the fibroids themselves.

5 Consider acupuncture. One study suggests that acupuncture may be effective in improving fibroid symptoms for some women. Because acupuncture usually has few side effects, it may be worth considering if you find other treatments have not worked.^{[16][17]}

- Make sure you work with a licensed acupuncturist. Ask your physician for a referral. Keep your primary doctor informed of any complementary treatments you're using.

Method 2

Understanding Other Treatment Options

1 Look into medications. Most medications for treating fibroids are designed to change your hormone levels. They work by affecting the hormones that cause fibroids to grow, helping the growths to shrink over time.

- Gonadotropin-releasing hormone (Gn-RH) agonists are the most commonly prescribed drugs for shrinking fibroids. The drug puts the body into a temporary post-menopausal state, blocking the production of estrogen. It has many short and long-term side effects.^[18]
- Letrozole is a medication that decreases estrogen levels. In one study, letrozole reduced fibroids by 46%.^[19]
- Other medications may be available.

2 Ask about contraceptives to reduce bleeding. Hormonal contraceptives may reduce your menstrual bleeding, though they may not change the size of your fibroids. The more common contraceptives used to alleviate excessive bleeding are oral contraceptives or a progestin-releasing intrauterine device (IUD).^[20]

3 Look into MRI-guided focused ultrasound surgery (FUS). This is a non-invasive procedure that doesn't require an incision. Sound waves are used to locate, heat and destroy the fibroids while you are inside an MRI scanner.^[21]

- This approach is fairly new and may not be widely available. There is not much data on long term effectiveness because it is a new approach.
- Because MRI focused ultrasound and selective embolization are newer methods, there are no longterm studies on the safety of these procedures for women who later become pregnant. Some case reports suggest that if pregnancy occurs after these treatments, complication rates are increased. For those women with symptomatic fibroids who wish to conceive in the future, surgery to remove the fibroids and spare the uterus (myomectomy) remains the "gold standard."

4 Ask your doctor about minimally-invasive procedures. These are outpatient procedures that may involve some type of bodily intervention, but they destroy the fibroids without needing to surgically remove them. These methods often work quite well and make major surgery unnecessary.

- Fibroids can be treated or destroyed by uterine artery embolization (which injects small particles that cut off blood flow to the fibroids) or myolysis, which uses an electric current or laser to attack the fibroids.^[22]
- A laparoscopic or robotic myomectomy is a procedure in which fibroids are removed while the uterus is left intact.^[23]
- Uterine embolization uses substances injected into the uterine arteries to cut off the blood supply to the fibroids.

5 Find out if surgery is the best option. In extreme cases, major surgery may be the best way to remove fibroids to improve the health of the body. Either an abdominal myomectomy or a hysterectomy can be performed to make sure the fibroids are permanently removed.^[24]

Method
3

Understanding Fibroids

1 Understand what fibroids are. Fibroids are rubbery growths that form on the walls of the uterus. They occur most frequently in women of reproductive age, especially after age 35. In most cases these benign growths remain small, and they almost never lead to cancer. However, for some women, fibroids can significantly affect their quality of life.^[25]

- Fibroids are usually categorized into three groups. Submucosal fibroids grow in the uterine cavity. Intramural fibroids grow in the wall of the uterus. Subserosal fibroids grow on the outside of the uterus.^[26]

2 Recognize the symptoms of fibroids. Many women may have fibroids and not even be aware of their condition. For many women, fibroids do not cause any symptoms, discomfort, or health issues. However, fibroids can cause some painful or even debilitating symptoms in some women. If you experience any of the following symptoms, see your doctor.^{[27][28][29]}

- *Heavy and/or prolonged menstrual bleeding.* Fibroids cause the uterine wall to become thicker than normal during the menstruation cycle, causing much heavier bleeding than usual. In some cases, bleeding is severe enough to cause anemia.^[30]
- *Significant change in menstruation patterns* (e.g., sharply increased pain, much heavier bleeding).
- *Pelvic pain, or feelings of “heaviness” or “fullness” in the pelvic area.* Fibroids can range in size from very small (smaller than a seed) to very large (grapefruit-sized). Large fibroids may even cause your abdomen to look distended as with pregnancy.
- *Pain during sexual intercourse.*
- *Frequent and/or difficult urination.*
- *Constipation.* Fibroids may expand and cause the uterus to press against your bladder or bowels, causing constipation.
- *Backache*
- *Infertility.* This is very rare, but in some cases fibroids can reduce implantation rates, leading to infertility.^[31]

3 Learn what causes fibroids. While scientists are not definitely sure what causes fibroids, a few factors seem to be at play. Knowing more about these may help you determine what course of treatment is right for you.^[32]

- It is possible that abnormalities in a woman's uterine blood vessels may cause fibroids to occur.
- Genes that cause uterine muscle cells to grow at an accelerated rate may be a cause.
- Fibroids seem to be related to a woman's reproductive cycle, rarely occurring before the first menstrual period and often accelerating during pregnancy. Some scientists suggest that the hormones estrogen and progesterone may be involved.

4 Understand the limitations of current research. Unfortunately, there is very little scientific evidence to support natural treatment methods for fibroids.^[33] Even in cases where research seems promising, studies are often limited or at risk of clinical error. Not enough research has been conducted on any one method, whether it be dietary recommendations, homeopathic treatments, exercise, and so on.

- This means that if you're in a situation in which living with fibroids has become uncomfortable or detrimental to your health, you should discuss standard treatment options with your doctor. However, if your fibroids are not

causing you pain or interfering with your life in any major way, there's no harm in trying a few natural methods that are said by many to make a difference.

- To be on the safe side, talk to your doctor about treatment methods you want to try to make sure they won't have any sort of adverse effects.

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Warnings

- Some unreliable sources will suggest that you can “cure” or treat fibroids with diet. This is not supported by scientific evidence. Eating well, avoiding too much red meat, and consuming vegetables and foods high in Vitamin D may help you manage fibroids. However, there is no evidence that fiber, “special” foods, or homeopathy are effective in treating fibroids.^[34]

Sources and Citations

1. <http://report.nih.gov/nihfactsheets/viewfactsheet.aspx?csid=50>
2. <https://nwhn.org/fibroids>
3. http://www.health.harvard.edu/womens-health/what_to_do_about_fibroids

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