What is a UAE?
A UAE is a procedure performed under x-ray guidance to treat benign (non-cancerous) fibroids within the uterus. This procedure involves blocking off or embolising the blood vessels that supply the fibroid. This procedure is performed if you have fibroids that are causing complications such as pain, heavy bleeding and/or increased need to pass urine.

What to Bring:
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.)

Preparation:
You may be required to have a blood test prior to your procedure to check your kidney function and blood clotting levels.

You will be required to attend a clinic appointment prior to your procedure date where the doctor will explain the procedure and discuss with you the potential risks and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

At the time of booking and when you attend your procedure, tell staff if you have any allergies, have had a previous reaction to an x-ray dye or if you have kidney disease. This ensures that the appropriate measures are taken to carry out the procedure with maximum safety.

Arrange for someone to take you home from your procedure.

Eating/ drinking:
You will be required not to eat or drink for 4 hours prior to your procedure.

Medications:
Tell staff at the time of booking if you are taking any:

- Blood thinning medications (e.g. Warfarin, Xarelto, Rivaroxaban, Pradaxa, Apixaban, Eliquis),
- Antiplatelet medications (e.g. Clopidogrel, Plavix, Aspirin)
- Diabetic medication containing metformin.

You will be informed if you need to stop taking these medications before your procedure.

Continue taking other medications as prescribed, unless directed otherwise by medical or nursing staff prior to your procedure.

Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.

Procedure:
On arrival to the hospital a nurse will discuss with you your medical history and insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your hand or arm.

During the procedure you will be lying on a bed in the angiography room. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure by nursing staff. You may also be given medication to keep you comfortable and relaxed during the procedure if you require it.
Uterine Artery Embolisation (UAE)
Radiology Service

This procedure is performed by accessing a blood vessel in your groin called the femoral artery. Your groin will be cleaned with an antiseptic wash, and local anaesthetic will be used to numb a small section of skin in your groin. A small incision will be made and a small needle will be inserted through the numb patch of skin into the femoral artery. A thin plastic tube called a sheath is then inserted into the femoral artery and the needle is removed. You may feel some slight pressure in your groin when inserting the sheath but it shouldn’t be painful.

The doctor will then insert a longer plastic tube called a catheter through the sheath to navigate into the blood vessels of your uterus and locate the specific blood vessels that supply the fibroid to be treated. Once in the correct place, embolisation materials are deployed to treat the fibroid.

Once completed, the catheter and sheath will be removed and pressure will be applied to the puncture site by the doctor for approximately 10-15mins to stop any bleeding which may occur. A small waterproof dressing will then be placed over the puncture site.

Post Procedure Care:
You will be required to lie flat for 4 hours after your procedure to prevent bleeding from the puncture site. You will be transferred to your ward where you will be monitored closely by nursing staff.

It is common to experience some pain in your pelvis after this procedure that is often described as cramping or period pain. Pain medication will be readily available if you require it.

Discharge
Generally you will be required to stay in the hospital overnight after your procedure and will be discharged home the following morning.

Results:
The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor.
Return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

Radiation Risk
Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

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References
Inside Radiology: www.insideradiology.com.au
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

If you would like to provide feedback or request this information in an alternative format, contact us at patient.information@alfred.org.au