



**OBSTETRICS &
GYNAECOLOGY**
PATIENT & FAMILY
EDUCATION



KNOW YOUR GROWTHS: **FIBROIDS, POLYPS AND OVARIAN CYSTS**

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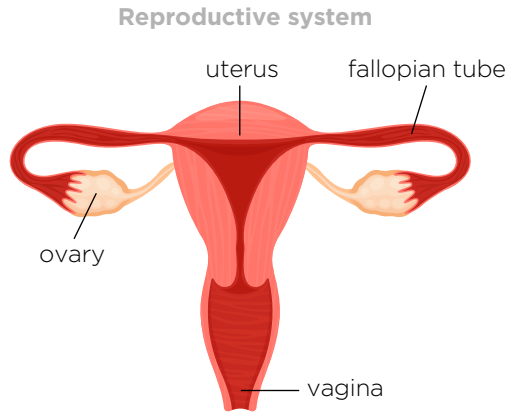


Parkway East Hospital

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIBROIDS, POLYPS AND OVARIAN CYSTS

Despite your best efforts at self-care, abnormal growths can sometimes develop in your reproductive system.

Fibroids, polyps and ovarian cysts are the most common types of abnormal growths.



Fibroids are very common. Up to 80% of women may experience them.



As these growths develop, they may cause similar symptoms like:



heavy or painful menstruation



irregular menstrual cycles



abdominal and/or pelvic pain

These symptoms may also hint at more serious conditions such as cancer or infertility, so it is important not to ignore them and to speak to a gynaecologist early for advice and an accurate diagnosis.

Let us take a look at the differences between fibroids, polyps and ovarian cysts, their symptoms, and potential complications if left untreated.

What Are They?

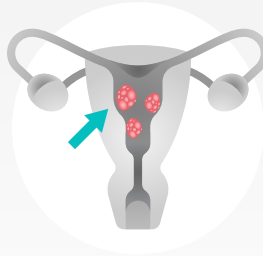


Fibroids



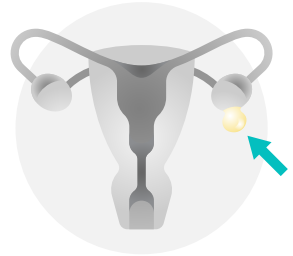
Muscular growths on the uterus wall. Rarely develops into cancer.

Polyps



Extra tissue growth of menstrual lining. Endometrial polyps are found inside the womb, while cervical polyps are found in the cervix.

Ovarian Cysts



Fluid-filled growths that may form within the ovaries. May develop into cancer, with a lifetime risk of about 1%.

Risk Factors



The exact cause of fibroids, polyps and ovarian cysts is unknown. These conditions can appear as early as in your 20s, and tend to affect more women in their 40s who have never been pregnant before. Having family members with these conditions puts you at a higher risk.

Fibroids

! No known risk factors

Polyps

- ! Obesity with infrequent menstruation
- ! Tamoxifen use

Ovarian Cysts

! Endometriosis

Symptoms



Fibroids

Most women may have fibroids without noticeable symptoms.

Others may experience:

Abnormal Menstruation

- Q Heavy or prolonged menstrual flow

Abnormal Bleeding

- Q Bleeding after intercourse
- Q Spotting or bleeding in between menstrual cycles

Pain

- Q Lower back aches

Others

- Q Increased frequency of urination and sensation of incomplete urination
- Q Expanding waistline
- Q Abdominal bloating with pressure on the bladder and bowel
- Q Infertility

Polyps

Some women may have polyps without noticeable symptoms.

Others may experience:

Abnormal Menstruation

- Q Irregular menstrual cycles and/or flow
- Q Heavy menstrual flow

Abnormal Bleeding

- Q Spotting or bleeding in between menstrual cycles
- Q Vaginal bleeding even after menopause
- Q Bleeding after exercise or intercourse

Others

- Q Infertility

Ovarian Cysts

Some women with ovarian cysts do not have noticeable symptoms.

Some may experience:

Abnormal Menstruation

- Q Painful menstruation
- Q Irregular menstrual cycles

Pain

- Q Pain in the lower abdominal or pelvic area during intercourse, strenuous movement, or shortly before or after menstruation
- Q Abdominal pain or distension on one side of the body

Others

- Q Unusually frequent, or difficult urination
- Q Constipation, or painful bowel movements
- Q Abdominal bloating with pressure on bladder and bowel

Potential Complications



Fibroids

Fibroids may:

- + lead to anaemia because of heavy bleeding
- + cause miscarriage and/or infertility
- + increase risks of complications during pregnancy
- + cause severe pelvic pain when the fibroids degenerate

Polyps

Polyps may:

- + cause miscarriage and/or infertility
- + turn cancerous in menopausal women experiencing abnormal bleeding

Ovarian Cysts

Ovarian cysts may:

- + leak and cause severe pain
- + cause pelvic pain and potential damage to the ovary when cysts twist around the supporting structures
- + cause painful menstruation
- + lead to abdominal bloating and distension

Seek immediate medical attention if you experience:

- + sudden or intense abdominal pain accompanied by dizziness and fainting spells

When should I see a gynaecologist?

The symptoms caused by growths such as fibroids, polyps and ovarian cysts can be worrisome. However, a gynaecologist will be able to discuss your symptoms, and conduct the necessary diagnostic tests to identify the growth and recommend treatment, if needed.

Diagnostic tests include:



Pelvic exam

Detects lumps in the pelvic area that may indicate growths.



Blood tests

Identify possible causes of symptoms such as anaemia and cancer.



Ultrasound

A non-invasive procedure that uses soundwaves to produce images of structures and organs such as the uterus and ovaries.



Hysteroscopy

A minimally invasive procedure where a scope is inserted through the vagina so your doctor can examine and remove small polyps or fibroids at the same time.



These tests may also reveal other issues. If you have symptoms, do not delay consulting your gynaecologist as early treatment is usually more effective.

SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR FOR PEACE OF MIND



Don't let fibroids, polyps and ovarian cysts affect your life. If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, make an appointment to see your gynaecologist for a review.

Do not delay seeing a doctor if you experience **severe vaginal bleeding or sudden and/or sharp pain in the lower abdomen or pelvic area.**

With early diagnosis and prompt treatment, you can say goodbye to bothersome symptoms and avoid complications.

For more information, speak to us at:



Gleneagles Hospital Singapore, Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital and Parkway East Hospital are accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI).

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