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HOLISTIC PROTOCOL FOR UTERINE FIBROIDS BY RICHARD J. CLOFINE, DO

Uterine Fibroids are tumors (i.e. swellings) of the uterine wall that are almost always benign. They are extremely common being present in up to 40% of women at the time of death. Just being present does not mean they cause any problems for the woman. The types of problems they can cause include 1) bleeding problems, 2) pain or pressure problems, 3) problems from being so big they take up too much room in the abdomen and press on other organs, 4) infertility and pregnancy problems.

Fibroids occur where muscle cells grow into an abnormal ball of cells that feel like gristle in the muscle of the uterus. They start as a single cell and can grow to the size of a full term pregnancy. There can be a single fibroid or multiple fibroids. They can be located in different areas of the uterus, each with different significance to the patient.

The natural history of fibroids helps us to understand our holistic treatment protocol. Fibroids feed off estrogen hormone and tend to grow very slowly over time. At menopause, when estrogen is very low, fibroid tumors stop growing and sometimes reduce in size. They rarely, if ever, go away. Thus our holistic protocol includes many things to reduce this estrogen effect. Many of these options are based on good medical common sense, not medical studies. This is because most of these therapies have not been formally studied relative to fibroids.

Many tools are available in addressing fibroid tumors. For most women, a holistic protocol can reduce symptoms and slow fibroid growth. In my twenty years of experience, I have found that fibroid tumors are very dense, physically and energetically. I have had good success reducing symptoms with natural therapies. Fibroids completely dissolving and going away is a very unusual thing to happen in my practice of holistic medicine. I feel obligated to point this out to patients so they can have proper expectations about what they are doing.

To properly institute a holistic protocol, you should first be evaluated by a holistic physician. Exactly what is recommended to you depends on your specific individual situation. It depends on your age and fertility desires, the size and number of your fibroid tumors, the location of your fibroids and the symptoms they are causing you. Any treatment protocol should be tailored to the individual woman's situation. So the protocol that follows here is just a list of options that you draw from with your holistic caregiver. How it is specifically implemented should be based on YOUR story, it is not a cookbook list of things to do.

Any time a therapeutic protocol is started, it is very important to follow it consistently, and then set an appropriate time period at which time you will frankly and honestly reevaluate your progress. If you are making good progress than the protocol can be followed indefinitely. If symptoms are not resolving, or the fibroids are growing, then it is important to face that fact and layer on other options to address the issue. As a holistic physician, I know that all tools have risks, benefits and an appropriate time for their use. This is true for herbs and pharmacy medicines, as well as for bodywork and surgery. There is a time and place for everything.

There are circumstances in which surgery, or other aggressive medical therapies, are indicated for fibroids. In general I feel this to be the case, when the care of the fibroid becomes a bigger energy drain on a women than surgical intervention would be. If a woman is plagued by severe bleeding, anemia, pelvic pain and inability to have sexual relations over many years, and this is not resolving with appropriate holistic care, she should consider having surgery to resolve the situation. Surgery with a 4 to 6 week recuperation may be a better use of energy because the situation will then be resolved. Surgery is usually removal of the fibroid ("myomectomy") or removal of the uterus ("hysterectomy"). Other interventions include Uterine Artery Embolization (a medical procedure to destroy blood flow to the fibroid



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forcing it to shrink) or strong pharmacy medications, which cause temporary menopause and low estrogen levels allowing temporary fibroid shrinkage. As with all methods (conventional or alternative) there are pros and cons to each tool and these need to be evaluated in the context of your specific situation.

Energetically Fibroids may be associated with feelings of abandonment. This is about a loss of nurturing energy for a woman. It may start as a loss of nurturing by others and results in the woman not nurturing herself. Often times retained anger is involved. This plays itself out practically as relationship and other first and second chakra issues. I have met many women who have self identified these type issues as what they believe initiated their fibroid growth. It is my firm belief that many of these women had completely resolved the emotional wounding that initiated fibroid formation. Even so, fibroids are such dense energy that while even though the initiating factors had been resolved, the woman was still left with this dense physical manifestation, a fibroid tumor.

ELEMENTS OF A HOLISTIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

- 1) Confirm your diagnosis and document the size of your fibroids with Pelvic Ultrasound.
 - a. This provides objective evidence to monitor your progress.
- 2) Monitor your progress by charting symptoms associated with your fibroids relative to your menses and your therapeutic interventions.
- 3) Make dietary changes
 - a. Generally a low fat, high fiber diet will help decrease estrogen levels
 - b. Avoid dairy, red meat, refined sugar, fried foods, saturated/hydrogenated oils, trans-fatty acids (in margarine and hydrogenated oils)
 - c. Increase the amount of whole foods, fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - d. Eat organic if possible.
 - e. Eat cold water fish regularly (salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, tuna)
 - f. Eliminate caffeine, theophylline and theobromine found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, and some medications.
 - g. Move to a high fiber diet or use a daily fiber supplement
- 4) Hydrate you body well with daily consistency
 - a. Drink half your body weight (in pounds) in ounces of water daily.
 - i. (if you weigh 140 pounds, drink 70 ounces of water daily.)
 - ii. drink distilled water or use a reverse osmosis filter or a high quality super filtered special water like "Penta".
- 5) Avoid estrogen containing Birth Control Pills and Hormone Replacement Therapy



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- a. There are exceptions to every rule. Sometimes the need for effective contraception, or the relief of menopausal symptoms, become so important that they may be used even in the presence of fibroid tumors.

6) Castor Oil Packs

- a. These are highly recommended by noted author and physician Christianne Northrup, M.D.
- b. Soak a clean cotton or wool cloth in warmed castor oil. Place the folded cloth over the fibroid and cover the cloth completely with plastic wrap. This avoids staining your clothes and keeps it warm. Place a towel over the plastic and put a hot water bottle on it. Leave it on overnight and repeat five nights in a row, then rest for two nights. Do this for three weeks at a time.

7) Natural Progesterone Cream

- a. Use an over the counter product equivalent to “Progest” or “Restored Balance” (approximately 400 mg per ounce of cream).
- b. Use ¼ to ½ teaspoon of cream twice a day on days 12 to 26 (see FAQ sheet on natural progesterone cream)
- c. You will need advice of a physician if you are irregular or perimenopausal
- d. Often times prescription strength creams are prescribed, which are much stronger than over the counter creams

8) Take “Indoplex” (DIM = diindolylmethane)

This is a natural substance from cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and brussel sprouts). Composed of two molecules of indole-3-carbinol, DIM is much more absorbable. It helps shift the end products of estrogen metabolism to a more beneficial pathway (2-hydroxy-estrogens as opposed to the more problem causing 16-hydroxy-estrogen metabolites).

- a. Take 100mg “Indoplex” (DIM) twice a day
- b. Eat more cruciferous vegetables (though you will need to take the Indoplex to get a high enough dose to shift your estrogen metabolism).

9) Add phytoestrogens (plant estrogens in soy and many beans and lentils) to you diet so you are getting 3 servings daily. This helps block the more potent estrogens your body makes by binding their receptor sights.

- a. Another option is to supplement with 50 to 100 mg’s of soy isoflavones daily.
- b. Red clover, soy, lentils, pinto and other beans are good dietary sources.

10) Omega 3 and other Essential Fatty Acids:



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- a. I feel daily intake of Omega 3 and other essential fatty acids (EPA-eicosapentanoic acid, DHA-docosahexanoic acid,) is extremely important.
- b. It is important to obtain oils from several different sources and there are many “Super Omega” supplements that do this for you. Check at your local health food store.
- c. Use ground flax see daily (grind it in your coffee grinder) at a level of two tablespoons (or more) per day.. Mix it into foods, add to cereal, use in cooking or shakes. This also provides beneficial fiber to the diet. Or take 1-2 tablespoons of flax seed oil daily.
- d. Eat more cold water fish and take fish oil supplements daily.
 - i. Your supplement should contain at least about 18% EPA and 12% DHA (about 30% of the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oils.
 - ii. The y usually come in 500 to 1000mg capsules and I recommend 2000mg per day for general good health and 2 to 3 times this dose for specific therapeutic interventions.
- e. Include GLA (gamma linoleic acid) in the form of Borage Oil (highest percentage, 500 to 1000mg daily), Evening Primrose Oil (500 to 1500 mg daily), Black Current Oil, and other common cold pressed oils such as safflower, sunflower, sesame seed and soybean oil.

11) Other Supplements:

- a. A well formulated multivitamin-mineral high in antioxidants
- b. Bioflavanoids
 - i. Inositol (a B-complex vitamin) up to 4 gms / day
 - ii. Choline (a B-complex vitamin) one to two grams / day
 - iii. Quercetin– up to 400mg three times daily before meals
 - iv. Or take vitamin C (500mg twice a day)with Bioflavanoids (you will get lower doses this way)
- c. Methionine (an amino acid) one to two grams / day
- d. Take potent B-Complex vitamin – one “B-50” / day (50 mg’s of each major B-complex element)
- e. Magnesium 400-800 mg / day
- f. Vitamin E, 800 IU / day
- g. Ginger tea and other natural anti-inflammatory substances like Tumeric
- h. Daishon Radish

12) Herbs:



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- a. Vitex (Chaste Tree Berry)
 - i. Tincture, 25-30 drops two to four times daily, often shrinks small fibroids within two months. But results come from long-term use - up to two years.
- b. Wild Yam Root
 - i. Tincture: ¼ teaspoonful twice a day in the two weeks before menses (after ovulation)
- c. Red Clover (with Red Raspberry leaf)
 - i. Tincture ¼ teaspoon three times daily
 - ii. Tea: one ounce red clover blossoms with one teaspoon of peppermint in a quart of water for four hours, take freely through the day. Combines well with Red Raspberry Leaf.
- d. Strengthening the liver with herbs such as dandelion, milk thistle seed, or yellow dock root helps it metabolize estrogen out of the body, thus reducing fibroids.

13) Energy Medicine

- a. First and second chakra issues
- b. Pelvic wounding (sexual abuse, delivery trauma, etc)
- c. Acupuncture

14) Osteopathic Manipulative Therapy

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