



22nd September 2022

Deputy Connolly
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 44214/22: To ask the Minister for Health the information available from the HSE regarding uterine fibroids; his plans to ensure that accurate, up-to-date information on fibroids and fibroid treatments in Ireland is accessible to all women, and in particular those in marginalised communities; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the HSE website does not list fibroids in its A-Z list of conditions, despite the high prevalence of the condition among women, and its potentially debilitating side effects; the reason for this omission; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Connolly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Fibroids are non-cancerous growths that develop in or around the uterus and are made up of muscle and fibrous tissue, and can vary in size. Fibroids can be larger and occur at an earlier age in women of African ethnicity. The majority of women who have fibroids do not experience symptoms, however symptoms can include:

- heavy periods or painful periods;
- tummy (abdominal) pain;
- lower back pain;
- a frequent need to urinate;
- constipation;
- pain or discomfort during sex;
- abdominal swelling; and/or
- difficulty in becoming pregnant.

If fibroids are suspected by a woman's GP, a referral is made for an ultrasound to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment for uterine fibroids vary depending on size and symptoms. In some cases no treatment is needed, but in instances where treatment is needed, it can include the following:

- Medication – tablets/injections;
- Surgery – myomectomy either via keyhole or open surgery; and

- Fibroid embolisation in selected cases.

A selection of treatment would involve the need for a consultation with a Gynaecologist.

We acknowledge that information on uterine fibroids is currently not available on the HSE website. We are currently reviewing the information that is available and will engage with our colleagues in HSE Communications with a view to identifying appropriate next steps.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme