

*Chinese medicine for healing***R** FIBROIDS

Roughly eight of every 10 US women have uterine fibroids, according to the National Uterine Fibroids Foundation (NUFF) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. About 20 percent of those women suffer from health problems such as pelvic pain, miscarriages, heavy menstrual bleeding, painful sex, and infertility—all caused by fibroids, which can weigh as little as an apple seed or as much as 40 pounds. Because fibroids often shrink and become asymptomatic after menopause, many researchers speculate that they're caused by hormonal imbalances.

Western doctors diagnose fibroids using several methods, including ultrasound and laparoscopy, then usually remove or shrink them surgically. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately 200,000 US women a year choose hysterectomies to end their fibroid troubles. NUFF contends that many of those are unnecessary.

For a holistic approach to treating fibroids without surgery, you may want to turn to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Using holistic diagnoses based on physical symptoms, life events, emotional condition, and diet, TCM practitioners determine a fibroid's cause and then design an individualized regimen to treat it.

Jason Blalack, LAc, who practices Chinese medicine at Chautauqua Health Center in Boulder, Colorado, considers TCM an excellent option. "I have found that through using bulk Chinese herb decoctions we have achieved significant reduction in the size of fibroids in the majority of cases."

Although published research is limited, four Chinese fibroid studies—conducted between 1994 and

1999 using TCM—appeared in *Research from China: Collection of Blue Poppy Research Reports on CD* (Blue Poppy Press, 2004). The 193 women treated had fibroids up to five centimeters in size. Almost 28 percent of the women experienced a complete cure, and another

63 percent showed both a decrease of one-third or more in fibroid size and a significant reduction in symptoms. The researchers used whole-herb decoctions, occasionally supplemented with standardized herbal powders or pills.

Before starting TCM, fibroid sufferers should get a conventional medical diagnosis and bring the test results with them. And even if you've already had fibroid surgery or a hysterectomy,

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menopause.

TCM can still help correct the hormone imbalance that allowed the fibroids to develop in the first place and address post-surgical issues as well. —Morgan Stanfield

