



CCCA and Uterine Fibroids: Is there a link?

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Central Centrifugal Cicatricial Alopecia (CCCA) is the most common form of scarring hair loss in Black women. Uterine fibroids, while common in all women, occur more commonly in Black women. Like uterine fibroids, CCCA is a condition where excess scarring, or fibrosis occurs. Several years ago, a study conducted at Johns Hopkins found that Black women with CCCA are 5 times more likely to have uterine fibroids compared to Black women without CCCA. Fortunately, there was no difference in the rates of surgery for fibroids (myomectomy or hysterectomy) between women with CCCA and those without CCCA suggesting that CCCA does not influence the severity uterine fibroids. Below are some common questions we are asked about the connection between CCCA and fibroids:

Q: What are some symptoms of fibroids?

A: Most fibroids are completely asymptomatic and cause no issues. However, in other cases, fibroids can be associated with heavy menstrual bleeding, cramping during menstrual cycles, and recurrent miscarriages. Sometimes bleeding can be so severe that it leads severe fatigue due to anemia from blood loss.

Q: I have CCCA but I have never been diagnosed with fibroids but I do have some of the symptoms mentioned above, should I be concerned?

Since fibroids may be more common in women with CCCA, having the symptoms above raises the suspicion for uterine fibroids. If you do have these symptoms, talk to your gynecologist about being evaluated for fibroids. In many cases, treatment is not required but if treatment is suggested, it could quickly alleviate your symptoms.

Q: I noticed my CCCA around the same time I was diagnosed with fibroids, did my fibroids cause my CCCA?

No. There is no evidence that fibroids cause CCCA or vice versa, the evidence we found showed what for now is considered a coincidental overlap between the two conditions. Some women have taken the study's findings and feel that this means their fibroid should have been removed and this is not the case, as currently there is no direct link between CCCA and fibroids. More studies are necessary to understand the exact relationship between the two conditions.

Q: I have fibroids but my gynecologist does not think I need to get them removed. Will removing my fibroids help my CCCA?

A: Again, there is no causal relationship between CCCA and fibroids and there is no evidence that having fibroids affects the severity of CCCA. Similarly, there is no data that suggests removing fibroids helps with CCCA or vice versa. However, if you have severe anemia due to symptomatic fibroids, improving your iron levels will be beneficial for the health of your hair overall. If you iron deficiency anemia due to heavy bleeding but your gynecologist does not believe surgery is warranted, your levels can improve by taking iron supplements or even iron infusions provided by a hematologist.

Final Takeaway:

Uterine fibroids appear to be more common in Black women with CCCA compared to Black women without CCCA. For now, this appears to be an incidental finding and may reflect the fact that both conditions are manifestations of fibrosis/scarring of otherwise healthy tissue (the scalp and uterus). Future studies are needed to understand the exact relationship between the two disease processes.



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