

WHAT IS VERTEBROPLASTY/KYPHOPLASTY?



Vertebroplasty is an innovative, minimally invasive, non-surgical procedure shown to strengthen the vertebrae of your spine and significantly improve pain caused by vertebral body compression fractures. Fractures are often secondary to osteoporosis, cancer metastasis or trauma. These exciting new therapies have helped patients when conservative therapies have not provided adequate relief.

■ HOW DOES A VERTEBROPLASTY RELIEVE MY PAIN?

Vertebroplasty is an outpatient technique that involves injecting acrylic cement with a biopsy needle into the fractured painful vertebra. The needle is placed with X-ray guidance for proper placement. The acrylic cement quickly dries and forms a support structure within the vertebra that provides stabilization and strength. The needle makes a small puncture in your skin that is easily covered with a small bandage after the procedure. Patients are given local anesthesia and light sedation for the procedure to provide comfort.

■ WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING THIS PROCEDURE?

Vertebroplasty is performed while the patient is awake but sedated. The back is numbed by a local anesthetic. Through a small incision, a hollow needle is inserted into the fractured vertebra. It is guided by X-ray cameras above, below, and on the sides of the table to ensure accurate placement. When the needle is in the correct position, specially formulated bone cement is injected through the needle directly into the fractured

vertebra, creating an internal cast that stabilizes the bone. The needle is then removed, and the procedure site is covered with a bandage. The vertebroplasty procedure typically takes about 30 minutes for each vertebra treated.

■ WHEN WILL I BEGIN TO FEEL PAIN RELIEF AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Vertebroplasty is a new technique providing therapeutic benefit by significantly reducing pain and improving mobility in patients with vertebral fractures. In a 2007 report, it was noted that 95 percent of people treated with this procedure showed partial or complete immediate pain relief.

■ WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED RECOVERY FROM THE PROCEDURE?

Recovery is rapid. After the procedure, patients lie flat on their backs for a short period of time in recovery while the cement continues to harden. They may then go home. Almost all patients undergoing vertebroplasty experience 90 percent or better reduction in pain within 24 to 48 hours, and increased ability to perform daily activities shortly thereafter.

Sedation guidelines: If you choose to receive conscious sedation, you cannot have anything to eat for six hours prior to the procedure. You may have clear liquids (water, apple juice, clear tea, black coffee without cream or sugar) up to two hours prior to your procedure. You must also have a responsible adult (over the age of 18) accompany you to your procedure in order to assume your care upon discharge.