

## **Vertebroplasty**

The goals of the vertebroplasty surgical procedure are to stop the pain caused by a compression fracture (often resulting from osteoporosis), to stabilize the bone, and to restore some or all of the lost vertebral body height due to the compression fracture. A vertebroplasty is usually done for an older patient who would not easily undergo general anesthesia.

### **What happens during the percutaneous vertebroplasty procedure?**

The procedure involves placing a small needle into the crushed bone. A bone cement is injected into the bone to secure it. Several crushed bones can be treated at the same time. Your doctor guides the needle into position using special X-ray equipment. Therefore, open surgery is not needed. The procedure takes about 1 hour and is usually done using only numbing medicine. Some patients who are in severe pain may need extra medicine to make them sleepy. Usually, patients can leave the hospital a few hours after the procedure is done.

### **What should I expect after vertebroplasty?**

Many patients feel pain relief right away after vertebroplasty. Most report that their pain is gone or is much better within 48 hours. Most patients resume normal activity within 24 hours.

### **Is vertebroplasty safe?**

Vertebroplasty is very safe. The bone cement used to secure the broken bone is safe. Patients with tumors on the spine may be at slightly higher risk of complications. You should always discuss the risks of any procedure with your doctor.

### **How do I know if vertebroplasty is right for me?**

If you have significant back pain caused by a broken bone in your back that is not better after one to two weeks of bed rest and pain control medicine, you may need vertebroplasty. Newer fractures tend to respond better than older fractures; however, some older fractures can be treated successfully. The procedure does not help with chronic back pain or herniated discs.

### **How successful is vertebroplasty?**

In the United States, 75–90% of people treated with vertebroplasty will have complete pain relief or significant reduction of their pain.