Vertebroplasty

Fractures in the bones of the spine (vertebrae) can cause severe back pain and loss of movement. **Vertebroplasty** is a procedure in which a type of surgical cement is injected into the fractured vertebrae. This can make the spine more stable and relieve back pain. The procedure is often done by a doctor who specializes in radiology, orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, or anesthesiology. However, an interventional radiologist most commonly does the vertebroplasty.

**Before the Procedure**

Follow any instructions you are given on how to prepare, including:

- Do not eat or drink after midnight the night before the procedure.
- Tell your doctor what medications, herbs, or supplements you take; if you are, or may be, pregnant; or if you are allergic to seafood, iodine, contrast medium (X-ray dye), or other medications.

**During the Procedure**

- You will change into a hospital gown and lie face down on an X-ray table.
- An IV (intravenous) line is started to give you fluids and medications. You may be given medication through the IV to help you relax and make you feel sleepy.
- A local anesthetic will be injected into the back to numb the area. Then, a needle is inserted into the back.
- Contrast medium will be injected into the area. This helps show the needle and vertebrae clearly on X-rays. Using video X-ray images as a guide, the doctor moves the needle to the vertebra to be treated.
- A cement-like plastic material is injected into the vertebra. The procedure is repeated on other vertebrae if necessary.
- The entire procedure may take several hours, depending on how many vertebrae are being treated.

**After the Procedure**

- You will be asked to lie flat for 1 hour to 2 hours after the procedure while the cement hardens.
- You will most likely be able to go home within a few hours. Or you may need to stay in the hospital overnight.
- You may feel an ache at the puncture sites for the next 24 hours. To ease this pain, use ice or pain medications as directed.
- Drink plenty of water to help flush the contrast medium from your system.
- You may be able to go back to your normal activities in about a day.

**Potential Risks and Complications**

- Bleeding
• Infection
• Rib or vertebral fracture
• Irritation of nearby nerves
• Worsening of pain
• Problems due to contrast medium, including allergic reaction or kidney damage
• Leakage of cement, requiring surgery to remove it (very rare)
• Spinal cord damage (very rare)