

Vertebroplasty Patient Information

What is Vertebroplasty?

Vertebroplasty is a procedure used to strengthen a collapsed vertebral body (bones of the spine) due to osteoporosis, tumor or trauma. Special cement is injected into the vertebrae, which can relieve pain and may prevent further collapse of the vertebrae.

This procedure is performed in the X-ray Department by an Interventional Radiologist (X-ray specialist). X-ray imaging helps the Radiologist to guide and position the cement into the exact place.

Why do I need this procedure?

Vertebroplasty is usually performed when simpler treatments, such as bed rest, back bracing, or if pain medication no longer works, or have begun to cause other problems, such as stomach ulcers and/or drowsiness. The procedure is often performed on patients who cannot or do not want open spinal surgery, or with bones too weak for surgical spinal repair.

What should I expect?

You will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important that you understand the procedure and its benefits and risks. Bring a family member or friend with you, to help with your questions or concerns about the procedure. On the day of the procedure, you will have an intravenous line (IV) placed into a vein in your arm. This IV line will also be used to give you other medicines and fluids during the procedure.

You will be asked to lie on your stomach, where the Radiologist will give you local anaesthetic and a small cut made in your back. A hollow needle is passed through the spinal muscles until its tip is positioned within the vertebra and the surgical cement is injected. It usually takes about 90 minutes to perform, but this depends on how many vertebrae need to be treated.

What happens after the procedure?

You may be a little sore after the procedure, but your symptoms should gradually disappear.

If you are an inpatient or being admitted, you will go to your hospital room where the staff will monitor you. Each patient's length of stay will vary.

If you are an outpatient and allowed to go home on the same day, then you will go to the Same Day Surgery Unit (SDS) to recover. Due to the medication you will receive, you won't be allowed to drive yourself. Make sure you arrange for someone to take you home.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-431-8107 (General campus) or 416-495-2480 (Birchmount campus).