What is Vertebroplasty.

Vertebroplasty provides new hope for those suffering from severe back pain caused by osteoporosis, metastatic tumors or dialysis. These conditions can cause bones to become brittle, resulting in weakened vertebra. Once this happens, the smallest activity can cause these vertebrae to collapse. The pain from these vertebral compression fractures is extreme, which limits the possibility of normal movement or simple activities.

In the past, people who had these types of fractures had three options: pain medications, bed rest and external bracing. While these conservative options are still the first choice for reducing discomfort, if severe pain persists, patients can now be referred to a specially trained physician, an interventional radiologist, to see if Vertebroplasty will work for them.

Immediate Pain Relief-Minimally Invasive:

Vertebroplasty works by stabilizing the collapsed vertebra using a specially formulated acrylic bone cement. It's done as an outpatient procedure-no hospitalization, no surgery-and requires only a local anesthetic. Once the area of the spine is numb, the doctor inserts one or two needles through a small incision. Most patients experience pain relief within hours. Best of all, patients are able to resume their daily activities within 48 hours.

Diagnosis:

In a compression fracture of the vertebrae, the bone tissue of the vertebral body collapses. More than one vertebra may be affected. This condition is commonly caused by osteoporosis and less often by tumor, or trauma to the back. When the fracture occurs as a result of osteoporosis, the vertebrae in the thoracic (chest) and lower spine are usually affected, and symptoms may become worse with walking. With multiple fractures, kyphosis, a forward hump-like curvature of the spine, may result. Pressure on the spinal cord may occur producing symptoms of numbness, tingling, or weakness. Symptoms depend upon the area of the back that is affected. In some cases, the fracture heals without treatment and the pain goes away. In others, the bone does not stabilize and continues to move, causing persistent pain that in turn limits physical activities and reduces independence.

To schedule your appointment today, call 775-888-1180

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How the procedure works:

Vertebroplasty requires that you lie on your stomach through the entire procedure, which is performed under local anesthesia and light sedation. A small nick is then made in the skin near the spine, and a needle is inserted. Biocompatible bone cement will be injected through the needle and into the vertebral body. The needle is removed and the cement is allowed to harden. The small opening is covered with a bandage.

Post operative:

This procedure can take from 1-2 hours (depending on how many vertebrae are treated). You will be required to remain for observation for one to two hours. Typically, patients are then released to go home and resume normal activities within 24-48 hours. In most cases, pain caused by vertebral compression fractures will be gone or diminished within 48 hours. You might experience some discomfort or bruising where the needle was inserted.

If you or a loved one may be suffering from pain associated with a vertebral compression fracture, we encourage you to discuss this treatment option with your primary care physician. Or if you prefer, one of Great Basin Imaging's specialty trained Interventional Radiologist can meet with you as well. To schedule you consultation or appointment call GBI at 775-888-1180.

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