

Your doctor has determined that you are a candidate for a procedure called Balloon Kyphoplasty. This is a minimally invasive procedure that uses bone cement to stabilize a vertebral compression fracture. Stabilizing the fracture will reduce bone pain and help to increase your overall quality of life.

THE PROCEDURE

Balloon kyphoplasty can be done under local or general anesthesia—your doctor will determine which option is appropriate for you. Typically, the procedure takes less than one hour per fracture. You may be discharged from the hospital on the day of the procedure, but some patients require an overnight hospital stay. Balloon kyphoplasty begins with two small incisions, approximately 1cm. in length. Using a hollow instrument, the surgeon creates a small pathway into the fractured bone. A small balloon is guided through the instrument into the vertebra. Next, the balloon is carefully inflated in an attempt to raise the collapsed vertebra and return it to its normal position. Once the vertebra is in the correct position, the balloon is deflated and removed. This process creates a void (cavity) within the vertebral body. The cavity is filled with bone cement to support the surrounding bone and prevent further collapse. The cement forms an internal cast that holds the vertebra in place. Generally, the procedure is done on both sides of the affected vertebra.

Any type of surgery involves risk. Although the complication rate for balloon kyphoplasty is low, risks include wound infection, leakage of bone cement into the muscle and tissue surrounding the spinal cord, and nerve injury that can, in rare instances, cause paralysis. Patients are encouraged to discuss these and other risks with their surgeon.

RECOVERY

Many patients treated with balloon kyphoplasty report an almost immediate decrease in pain, varying from partial to complete pain relief. For most patients, pain relief is sustained in the long term. Some patients report experiencing muscle spasms for several days following the procedure. This generally resolves on its own with rest and the use of ice, heat and over the counter analgesics (such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen).

Patients can typically resume day-to-day activities the day after the procedure. We ask patients to limit the amount of lifting they do to less than 5 lbs. for about a week. Generally, patients are seen in the office for a post-operative visit in approximately two weeks following the procedure. You may feel free to call us at any time if you have questions or if problems arise. Our office # is (508) 771-0006.