

## Kyphoplasty

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#### What is kyphoplasty?

Balloon kyphoplasty, is a highly successful procedure that treats people who suffer painful spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis.

#### Osteoporosis and compression fractures

Osteoporosis affects more than 28 million Americans and causes bones to become brittle and porous. Over time, osteoporosis affects the spine through compression fractures, which cause the vertebrae in the spinal column to collapse. This produces the curved spine or "hump" that causes shortened height. In addition to enormous pain, compression fractures can trigger other serious health problems such as decreased lung capacity and difficulty sleeping.

#### The kyphoplasty procedure

As of October 2005, more than 195,000 fractures have been treated with balloon kyphoplasty. The goal of kyphoplasty is to stop the pain caused by the fracture, stabilize the bone, and try to restore some or all of the vertebral height lost during compression. The additional height reduces the spinal deformity, or curved back, and straightens the curved, fractured vertebrae.

This minimally invasive procedure uses a special surgical balloon called the KyphX inflatable bone tamp to heighten the vertebrae. The doctor uses a small incision in the patient's back to insert and guide a narrow tube to the fractured bone area. Then the special balloon is inserted through the tube and into the fractured vertebrae, where the balloon is gently inflated to elevate, or straighten, the fractured bone. This action often reverses some of the collapse in the vertebrae and also creates a cavity in the soft interior part of the vertebrae. The doctor fills the cavity with a quick-drying orthopedic cement, which stabilizes the patient's back.

#### Post kyphoplasty treatment

After undergoing kyphoplasty, most patients experience immediate improvement in their health and quality of life. For most patients, pain relief is immediate which eliminates the need for ongoing pain medications. In addition, kyphoplasty allows patients to live an active life. This helps patients avoid complications that typically arise from living a sedentary lifestyle – a coping technique that many people use to avoid the debilitating back pain when moving, sneezing or even coughing.

Kyphoplasty is usually performed as a day, outpatient surgery. Most patients immediately resume normal activity, however patients are advised to avoid strenuous exertion for at least six weeks.

#### Seeking treatment for compression fractures

If you or a loved one suffers from compression fractures caused by osteoporosis, don't delay treatment. Medical studies show that an initial compression fracture due to osteoporosis is five times more likely to be followed by additional compression fractures. I encourage you to consult with your primary care physician and ask if kyphoplasty is an appropriate treatment option to relieve your back pain.

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**For more information, call (978) 687-2321.**

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