Spinal Compression Fractures: Vertebroplasty and Kyphoplasty

One-page summary of the full Spinemathema guide. Scan the QR code for the full guide, with references and audio.

Key points

- A vertebral compression fracture is a break in which a spinal bone is squashed, usually into a wedge shape. Osteoporosis (thinning bones) is the most common cause.
- Most of these fractures heal with pain relief, a short period of rest and sometimes a brace.
- Vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty inject medical bone cement into the broken bone through a needle to stabilise it and reduce pain. Kyphoplasty first creates a space with a small balloon.
- These are short procedures, usually with an overnight stay. Serious complications are uncommon but include cement leakage.

Seek urgent medical help (A&E or 999) if you have:

- New weakness, numbness or tingling in your legs
- Difficulty passing urine or loss of bladder or bowel control
- Sudden shortness of breath or chest pain after the procedure
- Severe back pain with fever or feeling generally unwell

Not sure how urgent it is? Call NHS 111. More warning signs: spinemathema.com/warning-signs

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General information only, not personal medical advice.
If you are worried about your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, or in an emergency call 999.

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