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SPINAL SURGERY
CRANIAL SURGERY
MICRO NEUROSURGERY
SPINAL INSTRUMENTATION

COMPREHENSIVE NON-OPERATIVE SPINE CARE

Vertebral Compression Fractures – Non-surgical Management

The doctors of Neurosurgical Consultants want to keep you informed about your compression fracture and its management. Patients may be managed in the hospital or as an out patient. This information is intended for both. Please review this information and talk with your doctor(s) or the hospital staff about your progress.

What is a Compression Fracture?

As we get older, our bones become more brittle and fracture (or break) more easily. The vertebral body, the front part of the vertebral segments of the spine, are like blocks. When they fracture, they often will collapse from the body weight they support. This obviously changes the shape of the bone. Because the shape looks like the block of bone was "compressed," these types of spine fractures are called "compression fractures." Like any other bone fracture, they are painful. Since the spine supports the weight of the body, for most people they are especially painful while standing or sitting upright. Changing positions also aggravates the pain.

Treatment of Vertebral Compression Fractures

Like other bones in the body, the fracture usually heals with time. Minimizing movement or pressure on the fractured segment can help with pain control and healing. Depending on the patient's other medical problems, treatment may be surgical or non-surgical. After considering your compression fracture, other medical problems, and medications, your doctors have recommended non-surgical treatment of your compression fracture. For more information about the surgical treatment see "Kyphoplasty Instructions" (http://www.neurosurgicalconsult.com/kyphoplasty_patient_instructions.pdf) on our Website.

Medications

Often, patients need pain medication when the fracture is acute. This need may last several days or weeks. Every patient is different and their medication needs, length of therapy, etc. vary considerably. Reminder: your medications should be taken exactly as prescribed. If your pain

improves and you do not need the medication as frequently as prescribed, it is OK to wean down. **However**, you should not increase the amount or frequency of your pain medication without speaking to your doctor first.

Brace

Most patients receiving non-surgical treatment will have received a brace before leaving the hospital. You should use the brace as prescribed in the hospital. Since the sitting or standing positions put the most pressure on the vertebral body, it is best that the brace be applied before sitting up or getting out of bed. Modifications of this instruction may come when you are feeling less pain. Also, you may be given modifications for the use of a brace when taking a shower. These modifications **must** come from your treating neurosurgeon. If you have a question, you should call our office and speak to your doctor to have it answered.

Follow Up Office Visit

We would like you to have a follow up visit in our office about a month after your discharge. We will need an X-ray or CT Scan performed before that visit. When you leave the hospital, please call our office for instructions about new imaging and to make an appointment.

Your Future

Patients with vertebral compression fractures usually have osteoporosis. Once a patient has had a compression fracture, he/she is more prone to additional fractures. Sometimes osteoporosis is caused by other medical problems. These medical problems need to be addressed by your primary care physician. Others have osteoporosis as a part of aging. Either way, osteoporosis causes all the bones of the body to become brittle and more easily fractured than normal. Preventative or corrective treatments are always necessary. These include calcium and Vitamin D supplements, medications that help the bones absorb calcium, exercise, etc. These treatments need to be discussed with your primary care physician or an endocrinologist.

These instructions are meant to be a guide to recovery from compression fracture for patients in our practice being treated without surgery. We hope that you find them helpful. They are not a substitute for medical care by a professional. Also, other neurosurgeons may have different routines. For more information, visit our Web Site, <http://www.neurosurgical-consult.com>.

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