

Information for the public

Vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty for spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis

NICE 'technology appraisal guidance' advises on when and how drugs and other treatments should be used in the NHS.

This document is about when vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty (without stenting) should be used in the NHS in England and Wales to treat people with spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). It is written for people with osteoporosis but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisation listed on page 4.

These may not be the only possible treatments for spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether either is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

NICE recommends vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty (without stenting) as possible treatment options for some people with spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis (see below).

Who can have vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty?

You should be able to have vertebroplasty or kyphoplasty (without stenting) if:

- you have severe ongoing pain after a recent, unhealed fracture of the spine despite treatment for pain, and
- the pain has been confirmed to be where the fracture is.

Why has NICE said this?

NICE looks at how well treatments work, and also at how well they work in relation to how much they cost the NHS. NICE recommended vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty (without stenting) because they work better than other treatments available on the NHS. Although they also cost more than other treatments, this was justified by the benefits they provide.

Spinal compression fractures caused by osteoporosis

A spinal (vertebral) fracture is a break in a bone in the spine. In a compression fracture of the spine, the broken bone collapses.

Osteoporosis is a condition in which certain bones, including those in the spine, become thin and weak, and more likely to break.

Vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty

Vertebroplasty involves injecting bone cement into the broken bone in the spine. The aim is to relieve pain and strengthen the bone to prevent future fractures. Kyphoplasty involves inserting a balloon into the broken bone and slowly inflating it to increase the height of the bone. The balloon is then deflated and the space is filled with bone cement. Sometimes a stent (a strong metal device) is also put in the space, but this guidance did not look at kyphoplasty with stenting. The aim of kyphoplasty is to reduce pain and curvature of the spine. Both procedures are done through the skin (percutaneously) by injection, and using a local anaesthetic and a painkiller.

What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must make sure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued.

So, if you have a spinal compression fracture caused by osteoporosis, and you and your doctor think that either vertebroplasty or kyphoplasty (without stenting) is the right treatment for you (see 'What has NICE said?' on page 2), you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. Please see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance if you think you are eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

More information

The organisation below can provide more information and support for people with osteoporosis. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by this organisation.

- National Osteoporosis Society, 0845 130 3076
www.nos.org.uk

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) may be a good place to find out more. If you live in Wales you should speak to NHS Direct Wales for information on who to contact.

About NICE

NICE provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care. The guidance is written by independent experts, including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider the evidence on the condition and treatments, the views of patients and carers and the experiences of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, and consider the costs involved. Staff working in the NHS are expected to follow this guidance.

To find out more about NICE, its work and how it reaches decisions, see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance

This document and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA279

The NICE website has a screen reader service called Browsealoud, which allows you to listen to our guidance. Click on [Accessibility](#) at the bottom of the NICE homepage to use this service.

We encourage NHS and voluntary organisations to use text from this document in their own information about compression fractures of the spine caused by osteoporosis.

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