What is a vertebroplasty?
A vertebroplasty is a procedure performed under x-ray guidance to strengthen the vertebrae or bones that make up your spine to prevent further breakage. This procedure involves injecting a cement-like substance into the vertebrae that may have become weakened, damaged or unstable as a result of osteoporosis or other causes.

What to Bring:
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.)

Preparation:
You may need to have an MRI or CT scan of your back if you have not had one previously.

You may be required to have a blood test prior to your procedure to check your kidney function and blood clotting levels.

At the time of booking and when you attend your procedure, tell staff if you have any allergies, have had a previous reaction to an x-ray dye or if you have kidney disease. This ensures that the appropriate measures are taken to carry out the procedure with maximum safety.

Arrange for someone to take you home from your procedure and stay with you overnight.

Eating/ drinking:
You will be required not to eat or drink for 4 hours prior to your procedure.

Medications:
Tell staff at the time of booking if you are taking any:

- Blood thinning medications (e.g. Warfarin, Xarelto, Rivaroxaban, Pradaxa, Apixaban, Eliquis),
- Antiplatelet medications (e.g. Clopidogrel, Plavix, Aspirin)
- Diabetic medication containing metformin.

You will be informed if you need to stop taking these medications before your procedure.

Continue taking other medications as prescribed, unless directed otherwise by medical or nursing staff prior to your procedure.

Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.
Vertebroplasty
Radiology Service

Procedure:
On arrival to the hospital a nurse will discuss with you your medical history and insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your hand or arm.

The doctor will explain the procedure and discuss with you the potential risks and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

During the procedure you will be lying on your stomach on a bed in the angiography room. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure by nursing staff. Your back will be cleaned with an antiseptic wash, and local anaesthetic will be used to numb a small section of skin on your back. A small incision will be made and a needle will be inserted through the numb patch of skin into the vertebrae to be treated. The doctor will then inject the cement-like substance. You may experience some discomfort during the needle placement. If required, you may be given some medication to keep you comfortable and relaxed during this time.

Once completed, the doctor will remove the needle and place a small waterproof dressing over the puncture site.

Post Procedure Care:
You will be required to lie flat for 4 hours after your procedure. You will be transferred to the ward where you will be monitored closely by nursing staff.

Bruising and tenderness at the procedure site is to be expected and will subside after a few days. At home you should take simple pain relief such as paracetamol as required.

Discharge
Your doctor will discuss discharge arrangements with you depending on the treatment you have had and if further treatment is required.

Results:
The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor.
Return to your doctor to discuss examination results

Radiation Risk
Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

Contact information
Ph: (03) 9076 2963
Email: radiologybookings@alfred.org.au

Radiology – the Alfred
55 Commercial Road, Melbourne VIC 3004
T 03 9076 2000
alfredhealth.org.au

References
Inside Radiology: www.insideradiology.com.au
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

If you would like to provide feedback or request this information in an alternative format, contact us at patient.information@alfred.org.au