Schedule your appointment with the Vascular & Interventional Specialists of Charlotte Radiology.

Our Interventional Radiologists are medical experts, able to treat compression fractures and a variety of other conditions using minimally invasive techniques.

To schedule a consultation with one of our Interventional Radiologists, please call 704.358.IRMD.

Visit CharlotteRadiology.com for more information on procedures, technology, our subspecialized physicians and more.
What are compression fractures?

Compression fractures are injuries to the spine that typically occur when vertebrae become soft and weak secondary to osteoporosis, a disease that affects more than 10 million Americans. Osteoporosis is marked by weakened and brittle bones, which can result in height loss and spine curvature. This kind of stress on the bones can cause painful compression fractures. Without treatment, patients risk long-term back pain and possible spinal deformity.

What are the symptoms?

While osteoporosis affects more women than men, both are at risk for compression fractures, and they often go undiagnosed. Many patients mistakenly think their symptoms are simply a normal part of aging. One or more of these symptoms can indicate a spinal fracture:

- Sudden, severe back pain
- Worsening of pain when standing or walking
- Some pain relief when lying down
- Difficulty and back pain when bending or twisting
- Loss of height
- Visible deformity or curvature of the spine

How are compression fractures diagnosed?

Only a physician can diagnose a spinal compression fracture. The most common tests require a spinal X-ray to determine whether a vertebra has collapsed, a CT scan to provide detail of the fractured bone and/or an MRI scan to show greater detail of the nerves and discs. MRI is the preferred study, as it has the added benefit of evaluating how recent the fracture occurred based on the amount of swelling present.

How are compression fractures treated?

Recent compression fractures are treated with kyphoplasty or vertebroplasty, minimally invasive, image-guided procedures. Patients generally experience significant improvement in their pain, which may be immediate following the procedure.

- **KYPHOPLASTY** is a procedure that involves placement of a balloon device into the fractured vertebra. The radiologist inflates the balloon and then deflates it, injecting medical bone cement into the space created by the balloon to create an internal cast for the fractured vertebra. The main goal of this procedure is pain relief. The procedure takes just an hour or two, and most patients can go home the same day.

- **VERTEBROPLASTY** is performed under X-ray fluoroscopic guidance. Radiologists inject medical cement into the bone to create an internal cast for the fractured vertebra. The main goal of this procedure is pain relief. It lasts an hour or two, and most patients go home the same day.