

# Could I be at risk for a spinal fracture?

Spinal fractures, also known as vertebral compression fractures (VCFs), are the most common fracture caused by osteoporosis. As many as two-thirds of spinal fractures go undiagnosed and untreated because patients are not aware of the symptoms, so it is important to be aware of your risk for a spinal fracture and to see your doctor right away if you think you may have one. Check how much you know about spinal fractures:

### Facts About Spinal Fracture<sup>1,2</sup>

- Osteoporosis is responsible for over 700,000 spinal fractures each year in the U.S.
- One in four women over age 50 will suffer an osteoporosis-related spinal fracture
- Unlike the pain from a broken arm or hip, the pain from a spinal fracture can be mild, making it difficult to know you have a broken bone in the spine
- Left untreated, multiple fractures can cause a hunched back (kyphosis) and affect your overall health

### Risk Factors and Symptoms<sup>1,2</sup>

- Over age 50 or postmenopausal women
- Osteoporosis, low bone mineral density, or prior fractures after age 50
- Family history of osteoporosis, fractures, or a hunched back
- Height loss or a hunched back
- Sudden onset of back pain lasting more than a few days (even if pain is only mild)

### If You Think You Have a Spinal Fracture

- See your doctor as soon as possible for diagnosis and treatment
- Ask your doctor if you should have a spine X-ray or MRI
- If necessary, get a referral to a spine specialist for treatment – caught early, spinal fractures can be repaired

### Treating Spinal Fractures with Balloon Kyphoplasty

- A minimally invasive procedure designed to repair spinal fractures
- Corrects the spinal deformity caused by the fracture
- Significantly reduces back pain
- Assists return to usual day-to-day activities
- Increases strength, mobility and independence

Although the complication rate with Balloon Kyphoplasty has been demonstrated to be low, as with most surgical procedures, there are risks associated with Balloon Kyphoplasty, including serious complications. Consult with your doctor for a full discussion of risks.

1. National Osteoporosis Foundation. [www.nof.org/osteoporosis/diseasefacts.htm](http://www.nof.org/osteoporosis/diseasefacts.htm). Accessed August 31, 2007.

2. Gold DT, Silverman SL. The Downward Spiral of Vertebral Osteoporosis: Consequences. Monograph sponsored by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles. Remedica Communications, Inc., June 2003.