

New Nonsurgical Solution For Osteoporosis

Procedure Helps Repair Bones Crumpled By The Disease

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NEW YORK -- Rita Emmet is like many women and some men whose bones get brittle from developing osteoporosis.

But she didn't realize it until the vertebrae in her spine started to collapse and caused her stooped posture- and sudden pain.

"I woke a up a Sunday morning with severe pain along here in my back, and it was so severe I couldn't get up out of bed," Emmet said.

Normal vertebrae are almost square in shape. But osteoporotic ones can end up crumpled and flattened. At one point, there wasn't anything anyone could do when someone suffered from a compression fracture similar to Emmet's.

Normally, the age group of people who would be afflicted with osteoporosis would not be able to tolerate narcotics and often can't fit into a brace.

But now a new technique is both restoring some of the height of collapsed vertebrae and alleviating the pain. It's called Kyphoplasty, an ingenious combination of balloons and epoxy.

Under careful X-ray guidance, doctors insert large needles through the skin into the vertebrae. Then, special balloons are inflated inside the bone to open up the vertebrae. The space that's created is filled with medical grade bone cement.

"The cement takes over the stress of the weight of the body," said Dr. Fabien Bitan of the Beth Israel Spine Institute.

After the procedure, Emmet said the pain went right away.

The image shows a video player interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the word "Video" in white. Below this is a dark blue bar. Underneath is a light blue bar with the word "FEEDROOM" in dark blue. Below that is a light blue bar containing a small icon of a computer monitor and the text "Balloons Treat Osteoporosis" in blue. Below this is a dark blue bar. At the bottom of the player area is a light gray bar with a small icon of a computer monitor and the text "Download Real Player" in gray. Below this is a dark blue bar.

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