

Vertebroplasty: aftercare

You have had a vertebroplasty to improve your back pain following your spine fracture. In addition, we may have taken a tissue sample to find out what is wrong or we may have given you a facet joint injection.

This was performed by Dr _____

Date and time: _____

Blood pressure/Pulse on discharge: _____

Clinical condition on discharge: _____

What to expect afterwards

- Rest, take it easy and avoid strenuous activity for the next 48 hours.
- You may have pain, bruising and discomfort near/around the vertebroplasty site. This should improve over the next 24-48 hours. Please take painkillers for relief either at home or ask the nursing staff if in hospital.
- Slight oozing from your wound site is normal, if you see fresh blood or bleeding apply pressure. If it does not stop after 10 minutes of pressure then call for help – please attend the Emergency Department or call 999.

When to seek help

Please contact us if you experience:

- If you have any new weakness or severe pain in your legs following the procedure suggesting a nerve has become irritated by the cement. This is very unlikely.
- If you suddenly lose control of your bladder or bowel
- If your pain initially improves, but then suddenly worsens and is severe. This may indicate a new vertebral fracture.
- Increasing back pain associated with fevers/lethargy.

Please bring this information sheet with you if you seek medical attention.

Pain relief

If you have the following painkillers at home, take as follows if it is safe for you to do so:

- Paracetamol – do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours (unless you have been advised otherwise e.g. you have a reduced liver function).
- Anti-inflammatory – Ibuprofen, Aspirin, etc. You can take one of these in addition to paracetamol if you have moderate pain (unless you have been advised otherwise e.g. you have a duodenal ulcer).

As healing occurs, you will feel less pain. Once your pain is controlled and is mild, you should gradually reduce your painkillers until you are only taking paracetamol, then discontinue that as well.

However, if your pain remains severe for more than three days or is not relieved by your painkillers, you should contact your GP as you probably need stronger pain relief such as tramadol, fentanyl patch or morphine.

Wound care

Try to keep your wounds dry for the 3 days after which you can remove the dressing and clean it normally. If you find your wound is still open, redress it with a plaster until it heals.

When can I resume my normal lifestyle?

This will depend on how soon you recover. You should be able to resume your pre-procedure activities within 24 hours.

When can I drive?

You can drive the day after the vertebroplasty, although you should consider whether your wound or pain may prevent you from driving e.g. being able to perform an emergency stop comfortably.

What happens next?

The results of your biopsy (if taken) will go to your referring doctor (usually between 7-10 days). They should contact you or arrange a follow-up appointment to see you in clinic. The doctor who performed your procedure will contact you by telephone within 4 weeks to assess your response to the procedure.

Contact us

Radiology Day Case Unit on 0118 322 8368 (Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm).

Out of hours please attend Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Emergency Department or your nearest Emergency Department.

Further information

For further information about the Trust, visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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