

VERTEBRAL COMPRESSION

— Definition and cause

Vertebral compression or fracture usually refers to breakage on the front part of the vertebra (vertebral body). The vertebral body can be compared to a box, and when it fractures it corresponds to a **simple caving** in of its cover (vertebral endplate), or crushing of the whole. In the elderly, vertebral compression is quite common, being the consequence of major bone fragility (osteoporosis).

— Evolution

Compression fractures that are osteoporotic in nature are spontaneously consolidated within a few weeks in the vast majority of cases, but can cause pain and deformation of the spine.

— Examinations

A spinal fracture can be diagnosed from a simple **X-ray or scan**. **MRI** can be very useful by indicating how old the fracture is or its more recent nature.

— Treatment possibilities

Depending on the type and seriousness of the fracture, treatment will involve either immobilisation with a **belt or corset**, or an injection of cement into the vertebra (**cementoplasty**) to strengthen it, or vertebra stabilization surgery using metal implants (**internal fixation**).

— Cementoplasty

Cementoplasty or percutaneous vertebroplasty consists of the **injection of cement** into the vertebral body after compression, fracture or tumor.

It is a **percutaneous** procedure, as the cement is inserted through the skin with a simple needle whose path is guided by the scanner. It is performed under a **local anesthetic**.

Cementoplasty has a twofold purpose. It **immediately consolidates a fragile vertebra**, enabling the patient to go without wearing a rigid corset. It is also performed to treat back pain related to vertebral compression or a tumor.

At CCV Montpellier, this act is performed by the interventional radiology team by appointment, without hospitalization.

Images of our surgical techniques?
Visit the [Vertebral Compression](#) page on our website.

