

PATIENT GUIDE TO TRAUMA

DESCRIPTION

Spinal trauma results from significant physical injury sustained as a result of high energy impacts/transfer. Motor vehicle accidents and falls from heights account for a large portion of spinal trauma. These injuries can lead to compression of one or more vertebrae. Weakened bones (osteoporosis) can also lead to fracture at a low level of trauma. A traumatic episode can result in the sudden onset of back pain.

SYMPTOMS

Back pain after an accident.

Weakness or numbness.

Paralysis.

CAUSES

High energy impact trauma.

Motor vehicle accident.

Falls.

Weakened bones (Osteoporosis).

POSSIBLE TREATMENT OPTIONS

Non Operative Treatment

Pain medications, patience, and bracing are sometimes needed. Surgery may be considered for those who do not improve. Brace treatment is usually prescribed for 3-5 months.

Lumbar Vertebral Body Replacement

If a vertebral body has been severely fractured in a traumatic event, the entire vertebral body may be replaced with a stabilized metal cage or bone strut.

Instrumentation anchored to the surrounding vertebral bodies helps to stabilize the construct.

Decompression

This surgical procedure involves removing all or a portion of the lamina, removing bone spurs and/ or enlarging the foramen to help relieve pressure on the nerve roots or spinal cord.

Posterolateral Fusion Surgery

Often times, in addition to decompression, your surgeon will perform an instrumented posterolateral fusion by inserting a series of rods and screw coupled with the placement of bone graft. This fusion helps to provide increased spinal stability depending on the severity of the injury. Fusion surgery is mandatory to stabilize a dislocation injury of the spine. Nowadays many patients choose surgical treatment of a spinal injury to enable them to return to normal activities earlier.