

For those with severe back pain from an osteoporosis-related fracture, everyday activities like gardening, walking and playing with the grandchildren can be challenging or nearly impossible.

## Ingalls radiologists treat the pain of spinal fractures caused by osteoporosis



Ronald Smolinski and Dr. Richard Lichtenberg

Vertebroplasty (ver-TEE-bro-plasty), an innovative procedure for vertebral compression fractures now available at Ingalls, can help treat back pain safely and

effectively – providing prompt relief.

“Approximately 700,000 vertebral spine fractures occur each year in the U.S. from osteoporosis,” explains Richard Lichtenberg, M.D., board-certified interventional radiologist on staff at Ingalls who is specially trained to perform vertebroplasty. “The pain and loss of mobility that often accompany spine fractures are perhaps the most debilitating side effects of osteoporosis.”

Ronald Smolinski, 68, of Calumet City is familiar with the excruciating pain caused by a compression fracture. He knew something was wrong during a game of golf in April.

“It was a windy day, and I tried to hit the ball really hard to get some distance,” the retired police lieutenant explains. “All of a sudden, I felt a sharp pain like someone stuck a knife in my back. That was on the 12th hole. I tried to play another hole, but I couldn’t.”

Struggling with constant back pain for nearly two weeks, Smolinski went to see his family doctor who prescribed muscle relaxants and physical therapy. When that didn’t work, his doctor ordered an MRI. Smolinski had a compression fracture in the second vertebra in the lower back.

With the results of his MRI, Smolinski was referred to Dr. Lichtenberg at Ingalls for the vertebroplasty and had the procedure performed at the end of May.

[www.ingallshealthsystem.org](http://www.ingallshealthsystem.org)

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Vertebroplasty is a non-surgical, minimally invasive interventional radiology treatment that has been effective in reducing or eliminating the pain caused by spinal fractures.

Using image guidance by interventional radiologists, vertebroplasty stabilizes the collapsed vertebra with the injection of medical-grade bone cement into the spine. This decreases pain and prevents further collapse of the spine.

“In most cases, the pain caused by vertebral compression fractures is gone or dramatically diminished within 48 hours,” Lichtenberg says.

Smolinski is proof of that. Just days after the procedure at Ingalls, his back pain was gone. “I’m thrilled with the results and with the wonderful care that I received from Dr. Lichtenberg and Ingalls,” he said.

The nationally-recognized Ingalls Spine Center offers other minimally invasive procedures for compression fractures and a complete range of options for treating pain and disorders of the back and neck. For more information about Ingalls Spine Center, call Ingalls Care Connection at 800.221.2199. <

