

## Trauma

### Osteoporotic Compression Fractures

A vertebral **compression fracture** occurs when one of the vertebrae becomes weak and collapses (Figure 5). Most compression fractures are due to loss of bone density, or **osteoporosis**, common in the elderly. Note that osteoporosis itself is not painful and causes no symptoms unless a fracture occurs.

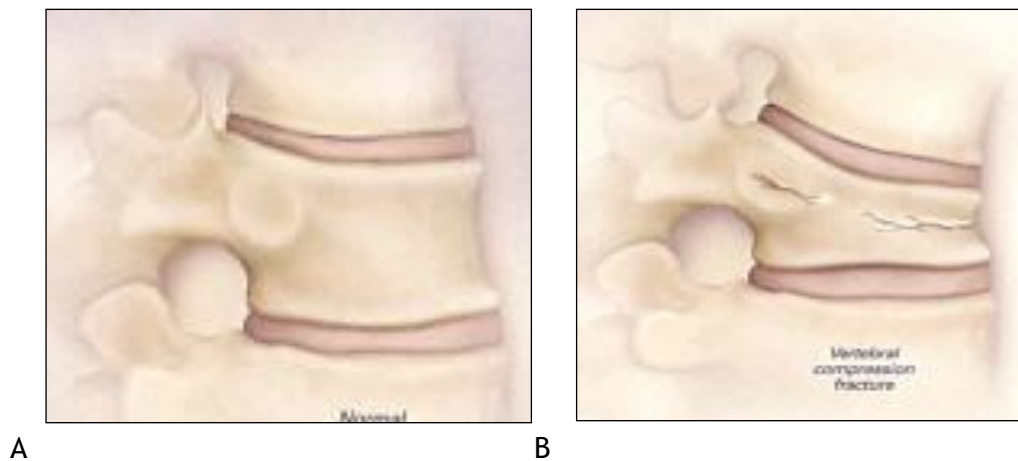


Figure 5: Compression Fracture.

A: Normal lumbar vertebral body, from the right.

B: Compression fracture.

Compression fractures can cause pain and/or neurologic symptoms. Pain typically comes on acutely and is epicentered at the level of the vertebral fracture. These can be treated with rest or vertebral augmentation such as kyphoplasty.