ELIZABETH POTTINGER WAS GARDENING in her backyard when one stroke of a tool into hard soil sent a sharp pain through her back and rendered her nearly immobile. Osteoporosis had caused her bones to become so weak and brittle that everyday activities, such as gardening, became more difficult than usual. Elizabeth's pain was caused by a fracture in her spine, known as a vertebral compression fracture (VCF). The Surgeon General reports that by 2020 one in two Americans over age 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass.

St. Claire Regional offers hope for patients with spinal fractures

It's important that you don't ignore back pain especially if you are over age 50 as it could be a signal that you have a spinal fracture. In the past, your options included pain medication, bed rest, and a back brace. These things helped with the pain, but didn't treat the spinal fractures. St. Claire Regional's board certified radiologists Craig Butler, M.D., William Lewis, M.D., and Stephen Williams, M.D. offer an option that treats the pain and repairs the fractured bone – Balloon Kyphoplasty.

Balloon Kyphoplasty can restore vertebral body height, significantly reduce back pain and increase mobility, often shortly after the procedure. In addition to reducing pain, patients experience an increased ability to return to simple, everyday activities such as walking, reaching, bending and lifting. Patients also report improved and sustained mental health, vitality, social function and emotional health.

“My pain was relieved almost immediately after the procedure,” said Elizabeth. “After 45 minutes, I could stand up straight and walk out of the hospital pain-free.” Elizabeth’s doctor realized how important this treatment option was for her.

Benefits of Kyphoplasty

Balloon Kyphoplasty is a minimally invasive procedure designed to treat spinal fractures. It can be performed under local or general anesthesia and typically takes about one hour to treat each fracture. In some cases, it may require an overnight hospital stay.

(get checked) Don’t let back pain win. If you suffer from a sudden onset of back pain or local tenderness accompanied with muscle spasms, you may have a spinal fracture. If you are diagnosed with a spinal fracture, ask your doctor if balloon kyphoplasty is right for you. For more information on balloon kyphoplasty at St. Claire Regional, call 606-783-6761.