

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Injection

What is PRP?

Platelets are the first things in your body to respond to any injury. Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) is the separation of the platelets from the other parts of your blood to allow more of them to be put into a specific location.

How does PRP therapy work?

To prepare PRP, blood is taken from the patient like any other blood sample for lab work. It is separated into layers by spinning in a centrifuge in the office. The platelets can then be pulled into a syringe for injection into other parts of your body. When PRP is injected into the damaged area, it re-starts the healing process to repair the damaged structure. The entire preparation and injection process takes about 15-20 minutes.

What are the potential benefits?

The concentrated platelets found in PRP contain huge reservoirs of proteins that are vital to starting and accelerating tissue repair. This may eliminate the need for more aggressive treatments (i.e., long-term medication or surgery), as well as a return of function.

What can be treated?

PRP injections can be performed in muscles, tendons, and ligaments all over the body. Recently, it has shown benefit within joints too. Some examples include: tennis elbow, jumper's knee, plantar fasciitis, muscle strains, ligament sprains, and more recently arthritis.

How many treatments are necessary and how often is this therapy administered?

Responses to treatment can vary, but most people will do well with a series of 1-3 injections. Each injection may be spaced several weeks apart. There is no limit to the number of treatments you can have as long as you are showing signs of healing.

Is PRP right for me?

If you have a chronic tendon or ligament injury and traditional methods have not provided relief, then PRP therapy may be an option for you. The procedure is less aggressive and less expensive than surgery. It will heal tissue with minimal or no scarring, and can alleviate further degeneration of the tissues. There will be an initial evaluation with your doctor to see if PRP therapy is right for you.

Will my insurance pay for this treatment?

Unfortunately, at this time, most insurance companies consider this to be an investigational procedure and do not pay for it. Although you will not receive reimbursement from your insurance company, we will submit a claim so that the data can be captured by the insurer and hopefully help to have this covered in the future.

What should I expect during and after the procedure?

The day of the procedure: you will be positioned comfortably while an ultrasound probe is used to see the injured tissue. Your skin is cleaned to minimize risk of infection. A needle is guided through the diseased tendon. The skin is wiped clean and a band aid is applied. Often the area is anesthetized to help with pain control.

After the procedure: you can begin to move the joint as soon as pain allows, and often, you return to physical or occupational therapy for guidance on progression of exercises to avoid doing too much too fast. Weight bearing tendons (knee, ankle) often have a brace to support them as well.

Follow-up: typically occurs around 2-4 weeks after the procedure with about 80% of patients noting a significant improvement by 12 weeks. For extensive cases, a second round of PRP is sometimes completed.