



Orthopedic Specialists of Seattle

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PRP Treatment Frequently Asked Questions

What is platelet-rich plasma (PRP) Therapy?

PRP therapy involves taking the patient's own blood and placing it in a machine called a centrifuge which separates the blood into several components, one of which is called platelet-rich plasma. Platelets contain many growth factors which have been shown to be very important with regard to healing. The process of centrifuging concentrates these platelets so that they are present in much higher numbers than what would typically be found in the bloodstream.

That platelet-rich plasma is then injected at the site of the injury to induce and potentially accelerate the body's natural healing process.

Is PRP New?

The technology has been used for years in surgical applications and wound care. The use of PRP for musculoskeletal injuries is fairly new and evolving into a promising treatment for both acute and chronic injuries. There are a number of medical studies supporting the use of PRP for tendon and ligament injuries.

Do I have to worry about the use of blood products?

The patient's own blood is used for the procedure so there are no transfusion risks or blood borne infection from a donor.

How long does it take?

Generally a PRP injection requires an initial visit to see if the injury would benefit from such treatment, then a follow-up visit for the treatment itself is scheduled. The actual injection process takes about 45 minutes and a majority of that time involves drawing and processing the patient's blood for the injection.

What conditions can be treated with PRP?

Many research studies have been performed, and many more are ongoing, which look at the effectiveness of PRP treatment. The most promising results to date have been with soft tissue injuries, including tendonitis, tendon tears, ligament sprains or tears, loose ligaments, and muscle tears. PRP has also been effective in treating cartilage degeneration such as arthritis. In some cases it can be used in conjunction with a surgical procedure.

What are some common diagnoses treated with PRP?

Shoulder: Rotator cuff tendinitis or tear, rotator cuff impingement syndrome or bursitis, bicipital tendinitis, labrum tear, arthritis, instability

Elbow/wrist/hand: Tennis elbow, golfer's elbow, DeQuervain's Tenosynovitis, trigger finger, arthritis, other wrist and finger tendinitis

Knee: Patellar tendinitis, partially torn or strained major ligaments of knee (ACL/LCL/MCL), meniscus tears, chondromalacia, arthritis, instability

Ankle: Achilles tendinitis, peroneal tendinitis, ankle sprain, instability, other foot or ankle tendinitis

How do I determine if I'm a good candidate?

Here are some general guidelines:

1. *Pain duration of 3-6 months or longer*
2. *Persistent pain despite physical therapy, activity modification, NSAIDs*
3. *Wishes to pursue alternative to surgical treatment*

How long will the recovery take?

Post procedure pain and activity progression varies among patients. Regular range of motion at the site of injection is started immediately and patients typically progress to regular activities and light aerobic activity within the first few days to 2 weeks, depending on the site treated (see the General Instructions sheet). Rehabilitation is done under the supervision of physical therapy and specific home exercises are tailored for patient progress. It is common for the patient to feel increased pain immediately following the injection which resolves typically in one to two weeks.

Is PRP Painful?

Patients typically tolerate the procedure well, although post-injection soreness is expected given the PRP-induced inflammatory response.

How many treatments do you need?

One to three treatments depending on the degree of injury and how long the injury has been there.

Are there any exclusion criteria that inhibit someone from getting PRP?

Severe anemia, low platelet count, abnormal platelet function, active systemic infection or active cancers are all contra-indications.

How long does it take to work?

Most patients notice some element of improvement by 2 to 6 weeks after the treatment.

Does insurance cover PRP?

No, PRP isn't covered by insurance or Medicare/Medicaid and is considered an out of pocket expense.

Your PRP injection may be combined with a hyaluronic acid injection, if recommended by your physician.