

## Platelet-Rich-Plasma (PRP) Injections: What You Need To Know

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### What is Platelet-Rich-Plasma (PRP)?

- PRP is a liquid substance made from your own blood that contains high levels of special growth factors and signaling molecules
- PRP is obtained by drawing your blood into a test tube and spinning it down in a special machine called a centrifuge

### Does Platelet-Rich-Plasma work?

- PRP is a new technology and currently there is a growing body of evidence supporting its use for bone and joint injuries and pain, especially tendonitis and some tendon tears
- There is level-1 evidence with randomized, blinded studies supporting its use and effectiveness in the treatment of lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow) and other tendon disorders
- PRP does not work for all bone and joint conditions, and may not relieve 100% of your pain
- There is a small risk that PRP will not work at all, especially if your condition is very long-term and very severe.
- If PRP is effective, usually one injection will be enough, but some patients require 2-3 injections total to complete the healing process.

### What are the risks of PRP injection?

- Because PRP is taken out of your own body, there are very few risks involved
- Any and all injections pose the risk of infection, but this is a very small risk
- The largest risk of PRP is that it may not be effective

### How does Platelet-Rich-Plasma work?

- PRP is usually injected directly into the area of disease, pain, or injury
- The enzymes and signaling molecules in the PRP then “call” other cells to the area, creating a type of inflammation that can be burning and painful at first, but finally leads to healing and new tissue formation

### How do I prepare for an injection?

- Discontinue any and all anti-inflammatory medications, as long as it is permitted by your primary doctor, at least 5 days prior to your injection
  - Ibuprofen/Motrin/Advil, Aleve/Naproxyn/Naprosyn, Mobic/meloxicam, Celebrex, diclofenac
  - Aspirin (unless prescribed by your doctor for other reasons)

- Oral or topical steroids on the area of concern/injection

## What should I expect on the day of PRP injection?

- Your surgeon will likely have you lie down on an exam table for the procedure
- Ultrasound will be used to target the area of pain or tearing, where the PRP will be injected
- Local anesthesia (lidocaine) or cold spray will be used to help numb the skin prior to injection
- Under ultrasound, the PRP will be injected directly into and around the area of tearing
- Most patients will experience a burning pain, sometimes very intense, at the time of injection
  - This is due to the injection of fluid into an already-inflamed area, as well as the pro-inflammatory effects of the PRP
- A small dressing or band-aid will be placed after injection is completed
- You will schedule a followup visit with Dr. Nelson 4-6 weeks after the injection

## What about after the injection?

- Swelling, soreness, and even redness can and may occur at the site of the injection for **several days to weeks** after the injection
  - This is the “inflammatory phase” of the injection, and is a painful but necessary step in the healing process.
  - This is only **temporary**
- Elevation is recommended in the first few days after the injection, especially if you have throbbing pain
- We recommend that you do not take any anti-inflammatory medication for **two weeks** after the injection. This includes
  - Ibuprofen/Motrin/Advil, Aleve/Naproxyn/Naprosyn, Mobic/meloxicam, Celebrex, diclofenac
  - Aspirin (unless prescribed by your doctor for other reasons)
  - Oral or topical steroids on the area of concern/injection
- You may use Tylenol (over-the-counter) or Ultram (prescription only) at any time
- We recommend that you do not ice the involved area for at least **72 hours** after the injection.
  - After 72 hours, you may begin icing the area for 20 minutes every 3-4 hours
- Avoid major **physical activity** (sports, lifting weights, intense or repetitive motions) for **two weeks** after the injection
  - Cardiovascular exercise (e.g. biking or running) is permitted as long as the affected region is not placed under stress

## When should I expect relief from the PRP injection?

- Most patients begin to experience pain relief once the inflammatory phase ends, 3-4 weeks after the injection
  - Some patients have earlier onset of relief, some later
- If relief/healing is going to occur due to the injection, it should be felt within 6 weeks of the injection.

## Questions?

- Call 919-872-5296 ext. 258
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