

Are there any special instructions?

You are restricted from the use of non-steroid anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs - such as Ibuprofen, Naproxen, Advil, etc.) one week prior to the procedure and throughout the course of treatments. These may slow down the tissue repair process. Initially the procedure will cause localized soreness and discomfort. Most patients only require some extra-strength Tylenol to help with the pain. Your doctor will discuss additional medications that may be helpful. The first week after the procedure, patients will typically start a rehabilitation program with physical therapy. However aggressive physical activity initially is discouraged.

How soon can I go back to regular physical activities?

PRP therapy is not a quick fix. This therapy is intended to stimulate the growth and repair of tendons and ligaments, and requires time and rehabilitation. Through regular visits, your doctor will determine when you are able to resume regular physical activities.

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Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)

DARNALL
ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

What is Platelet Rich Plasma?

Platelets are tiny, flattened cells in blood that are involved in normal wound healing. They make up a tiny fraction of the blood. They float in the liquid part of the blood (the plasma) along with the red blood cells. Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) is a small fraction of the blood containing the concentrated platelets. The platelets hold huge supplies of bioactive proteins, including growth factors that stimulate tissue repair and regeneration. They can help heal muscle, bone, tendon, ligament and blood vessels.

Potential PRP Injection Sites

Shoulders, Elbows, Wrists & Hands, Hips/Pelvis, Knees, Lower Legs, Ankles & Feet, Arthritic Joints.

How does PRP Therapy work?

To prepare PRP, a small amount of blood is taken from the patient. The blood is then placed in a centrifuge, which spins and automatically produces the PRP. The process takes 15 minutes and increases the concentration of platelets and growth factors up to 500%. When PRP is injected into the damaged area it causes mild inflammation that triggers the healing cascade. As a result, diseased tissue may be replaced with healthy tissue.

What are the potential benefits?

Patients may see a significant improvement in symptoms and an increase in their function. This may eliminate the need for long term medication or more aggressive treatment such as surgery.

What are tendons & ligaments?

Tendons, composed of collagen fibers, connect muscle to bone making it possible for you to perform every day physical activities. Overuse or damage to tendons over a long period of time causes the collagen fibers in tendons to form small tears, a condition called tendinosis. Damage most often occurs in the knee, ankle, shoulder, wrist, biceps, calf, hamstrings, and Achilles tendons. Ligaments are also composed of collagen fibers, connecting bone to bone., (i.e. joints) stabilizing the joint and controlling the range of motion. A damaged ligament is no longer able to provide support, weakening the joints and shifting the burden of support to the muscles (and then to the tendons) which should primarily act as movement engines. Tendons and ligaments have poor blood supply particularly where they connect to bone. Once injured (sprains or strains) they do not heal easily and the damage worsens with the stress of day-to-day activities. As a result the tendons and ligaments become inefficient and the muscles are over-taxed causing chronic pain and weakness and further damage.

I have heard of Cortisone Shots: is this the same?

No. Cortisone shots may provide temporary pain relief and stop inflammation, but they do not provide long term healing. Some studies have suggested that cortisone injections may actually weaken tissue. PRP therapy works in an opposite manner to stimulate the healing changes associated with inflammation.

What can be treated?

PRP injections can be performed in tendons and ligaments all over the body. Chronic injuries such as tennis elbow, shin splints, rotator cuff tears, plantar fasciitis, itiotibial band syndrome and other may be treated with PRP.

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

While responses to treatment vary, most people will require 1-3 injections. Each injection is generally spaced 4 to 6 weeks apart. There is no firm limit to the number of treatments you can have, and the risks and side effects do not appear to increase with additional injections. Your doctor can explain the anticipated course of recovery and further plans for therapy.

Is PRP right for me?

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

