

PLATELET RICH PLASMA (PRP) INJECTION

Patient Information Sheet

Introduction

Platelet Rich Plasma or PRP for short is an injection that is used in the treatment of chronic musculoskeletal injuries. The treatment has been in use for the past 10 years. It has been primarily used to help in healing of soft tissue injuries such as ligament and tendon injuries as well as in muscle injuries.

PRP procedures have proven more beneficial with repeated injections depending on the part of the area of the body affected. Depending on the area being treated, we may need to repeat this procedure as deemed necessary and requested by our Radiologist.

If you are taking any anti-inflammatory medications, these need to be ceased four weeks prior to the procedure being performed.

It is recommended that one hour prior to the procedure you take a strong pain-relieving medication as prescribed by your General Practitioner as this procedure can be uncomfortable. Please also purchase a support/compression bandage appropriate to the body part you are having injected prior to your appointment.

What is Platelet Rich Plasma?

PRP is a substance that is obtained from a patients' own blood. It is a suspension that is extracted by spinning the blood in a centrifuge. The blood separates itself into different layers, one of which is PRP. This substance has high amounts of several growth factors that are beneficial for healing.

How does it work?

PRP contains high concentrations of a number of cells and natural growth factors that promote healing. In normal wound healing these cells and growth factors are present in small quantities. When the blood sample taken from the patient is centrifuged or spun, the separated PRP is obtained. This is the concentrated layer of growth factors and cells.

When the PRP is injected into the area of injury in the tendon, ligament, or muscle, PRP promotes the healing in this region by producing an inflammatory reaction.

Therefore, the PRP treatment is primarily a healing procedure rather than a pain-relieving procedure. Pain relief is a secondary result of the treatment.

What are Platelet Rich Plasma injections used for?

PRP is used for several chronic conditions of the musculoskeletal system. It is primarily used for chronic tendon degeneration but can be used for chronic ligament injuries and some types of muscle tears. These are a few of the conditions that we treat:

1. Tennis Elbow and Golfer's Elbow
2. Achilles Tendinosis
3. Patellar tendinosis
4. Rotator cuff chronic tendinosis
5. Gluteus tendinosis
6. Hamstring tendinosis
7. Chronic knee and ankle ligament injuries

How does the doctor perform the treatment?

As part of the procedure, the nurse will take 20mls of blood from your vein. Your blood will then be placed in a centrifuge machine and will be spun for 15-20 minutes to separate the PRP. You will then be asked to come into the treatment room where you will be made comfortable prior to the doctor commencing the procedure. The doctor will inject local anaesthetic to numb the area, then they will inject the PRP obtained from the separated blood into the area of concern.

This will be performed using either an ultrasound or CT scanner to assist the Radiologist to position the needle accurately. The whole procedure will take approximately 45 minutes. There may be some pain or discomfort during the procedure. In some cases, the doctor may also perform a procedure known as 'dry needling' and/or 'paratenon stripping' simultaneously whilst giving the injection to further promote healing.

Are there any contra-indications to Platelet Rich Plasma injections?

PRP does not have any specific contra-indications as the treatment involves injection of your own blood.

What do I do after the procedure?

After the procedure you are free to go home.

It is essential that you have a driver as you may not feel up to driving yourself, especially if you have had a treatment on your foot or lower limb.

- Pain relief and icepacks will be beneficial for any pain following the procedure for a few days depending on each individual. Please ensure that the pressure bandage you have previously purchased is worn to assist in your recovery.
- You may feel sore or bruised after the procedure for a couple of days and it is advisable to have some time off work for up to one to two weeks. This is to allow the tendon or ligament to regain its strength after the injection.
- It is known that between four to six weeks after the procedure, there is a worsening of symptoms that subsides as time goes on. Most people find a significant reduction of their symptoms after three to six months.
- It is advisable to start physiotherapy two weeks following the PRP injection. The PRP is known to lay down the building blocks, but physiotherapy realigns these building blocks so that they function properly.
- It is important not to use anti-inflammatory medications after the PRP injection for up to six weeks. Medicines such as Nurofen, Celebrex and Voltaren are known to prevent the inflammatory process thereby reducing the effectiveness of the PRP. Pain can be controlled by medicines such as Paracetamol. Consult your GP if the pain is not being controlled adequately.
- Finally, remember that the PRP injection is a tissue healing procedure and controls pain secondarily. So, the symptoms improve over a period unlike a steroid injection that gives pain relief almost instantaneously but only lasts for a few months at most. It is possible and sometimes necessary to repeat the PRP injection.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your procedure, please contact the Dr Lakkaraju at Meridian Vein and Pain or email to admin@meridianveinandpain.com.au.