

Platelet-rich plasma therapy

at the Sharon Health Center



PRP therapy overview

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy uses the body's own healing process to regenerate damaged tendons or ligaments without surgery. The treatment involves an injection, or multiple injections over time, of the patient's own blood plasma (with concentrated platelets) into the injured tendons or ligaments. Human platelets are rich in connective tissue "growth factors," or bioactive proteins, that initiate healing. Injecting these growth factors into damaged tissues consequently stimulates a natural repair process.

Who may be helped

If you're reading this flier, your Sharon health-care provider has likely identified you as a candidate for PRP therapy. Typically, people with chronic tendon and ligament injuries who have not felt relief with anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy and bracing are candidates. People not wanting to have surgery also may wish to try PRP as a less-invasive, elective alternative.

How it works

It's a big name – platelet-rich plasma therapy – but a rather simple medical procedure. Done right at the Sharon Health Center in the doctors' office setting in one visit, blood is drawn from your arm and placed in a sterile, single-use container. The container of blood is placed in a high-speed centrifuge, or a machine that spins. During the spinning motion, the blood plasma and red blood cells separate. The red blood cells are discarded and the resulting platelet concentrate is drawn off into a syringe for injecting into your injured joint or tendon.

While the centrifuge is doing its job of separating the blood, your injection site will be numbed, or anesthetized. The injection will then be given. The entire treatment generally takes about 60 minutes and discomfort during the injection should be mild.

After the injection

For about a week prior

to, a week following the PRP injection and throughout the course of the injections (should multiple injections be given), anti-inflammatory medications, such as Advil, Motrin, ibuprofen, Aleve and Celebrex, should not be taken, unless otherwise advised by your provider. These will interfere with the healing response. Tylenol is OK to take or your doctor may prescribe pain medication.

When the numbing agent wears off, moderate pain for a few days following your injection usually occurs. In addition to taking Tylenol or prescribed pain medication, icing your injury may be recommended. Your health-care provider will also schedule follow-up exams, may recommend a course of treatment involving additional PRP injections and will work with you to determine when you can resume regular physical activities.

Long-term benefits

PRP therapy is not a quick fix. It's designed to promote long-term healing. The therapy requires time and rehabilitation to allow the PRP to work and the injury to heal. The good news, however, is that prior studies on patients receiving PRP treatment for tennis elbow show that more than 80 percent had reduced pain and some felt complete relief.

The risks

As with any medical procedure, there are risks. In fact, anytime a needle is placed into the body, there is a risk – though rare – of infection, bleeding and nerve damage. Your health-care provider will talk to you in greater depth about the risks of PRP therapy prior to starting treatment.

The cost

PRP injections are currently an elective procedure, meaning that **they are not be covered by health insurances**. As you consider whether PRP therapy is right for you, the out-of-pocket cost of these treatments should be strongly considered. Your Sharon Health Center team can work with you to estimate the cost of your injection(s).

Additional information

More information about PRP therapy is available from your health-care provider. The Sharon Health Center and Sports Medicine Clinic can be reached at (802) 763-8000.

