



Platelet Rich Plasma For Treating Chronic Pain

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A new treatment for pain is becoming popular among orthopedic and pain specialists: the injection of platelet rich plasma (PRP).

Most everyone thinks of blood platelets as being responsible for blood clotting after injury which is true. What many people do not know is that blood platelets serve two other important functions. Blood platelets are responsible for bringing white blood cells to the injured area to clean up the remains of dead and injured cells. Most importantly to this discussion, blood platelets release growth factors that are directly responsible for tissue regeneration. These substances are called cytokins and include platelet derived growth factor, epithelial growth factor, and other important growth factors.

PRP has been used for years in surgical centers around the US and abroad to improve the success of bone grafting (especially in dental surgery) and also by cosmetic surgeons for speeding healing time and decreasing the risk of infection after surgery. Only in the last few years have doctors and surgeons been experimenting with injecting PRP for the treatment of chronic pain. Tennis elbow, Plantar Fasciitis, Achilles tendonitis/tendonosis, Rotator Cuff Tears, meniscal tears, Osteoarthritis and chronic low back and neck pain are all being treated with the injection of PRP with the goal of regenerating degenerated connective tissue with reports of success.

A PRP treatment looks like this: a patient's blood is drawn and placed into a special collection kit. Using the person's own blood eliminates the risk of transmission of any blood-borne disease. This kit is placed in a centrifuge for 15 minutes and the platelets and plasma are separated from the red and white blood cells. Two thirds of the plasma is removed and discarded and the remaining plasma is mixed with the platelets. This higher than normal concentration of platelets is what gives us platelet rich plasma. The PRP is drawn into a syringe. The area to be treated is injected with a local anesthetic and after waiting five minutes for the anesthetic to take effect, the PRP is injected.

The injection technique is identical to Prolotherapy/regenerative injection therapy, only the solution injected is different. Same instrument, different sheet music.

Patient generally report two days of being sore and then usually pain relief occurs within the first week and continues to improve over a period of months. To date, one PRP treatment is the therapeutic equivalent of three or four prolotherapy/regenerative injection therapy treatments using dextrose.