Platelet Rich Plasma: An Advanced, Non-Surgical Treatment for Muscle & Joint Pain

- **What is Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP)?** PRP is a concentrated preparation of platelets and growth factors from the patient’s own blood that is used to treat a variety of soft tissue and joint disorders.

- **How is PRP Obtained & Administered?** During a routine office visit the patient’s blood is drawn, specially prepared, and then injected using ultrasound-guidance into the painful / injured area.

- **How Does PRP Work?** Wound healing is a complex process that involves multiple steps. Sometimes this healing process malfunctions, causing pain and dysfunction. PRP stimulates, or “kick-starts”, the natural healing process by mediating a controlled, inflammatory response.

- **Is the Procedure Safe?** Yes. Since the patient’s own blood is used, there is no risk of contracting a communicable infectious disease. Adverse effects of the procedure are no different from those of routine blood draws or injections at the same body locations. No significant side-effects have been reported.

- **What Conditions are Treated with PRP?** Various tendon, ligament, muscle and joint/cartilage injuries are frequently treated with PRP. It is a safe option for patients who have not responded to proper physical therapy and other non-surgical treatments (e.g. cortisone injections).

- **Is the Procedure Effective?** Several studies on PRP and similar biologic therapies show significant reductions in pain and improvements in function for arthritis and tendon disorders. Countless anecdotal testimonies of PRP’s benefits have been reported. Results vary; some patients do not significantly improve. The Sports Medicine, Orthopedic, and Musculoskeletal Medicine communities are actively researching and publishing articles on PRP in leading journals; the medical community’s understanding of this advanced treatment continues to grow. If the procedure is not effective, surgical referral is coordinated as necessary.

- **Are there any Contraindications to the Treatment?** Yes. Patients with certain medical conditions may be ineligible for PRP treatments: Low platelet count or platelet dysfunction, active infections or fever, anemia, and certain cancers.

- **How Long Before I Feel Better?** Pain and function typically improve significantly within a few weeks for tendon disorders, and often within a few days for arthritis. One treatment is oftentimes all that is needed. Sometimes second or third injections are performed at ~6-12-week intervals, depending on the response and the condition being treated.

- **How Long Does the Office Visit Take?** Typically less than 60 minutes from start to finish. While patients are typically able to drive home after the procedure, alternate transportation may be necessary in some circumstances.

- **Is PRP Covered by Insurance?** Currently PRP is not covered by insurances. If you are interested in learning more about this procedure or pricing, please ask to speak with our Practice Manager.
Platelet Rich Plasma: What You Need to Know
Before and After Your Procedure

Pre-Injection:

- Increase fluid intake in the 24 hours preceding the procedure (to ensure easy blood draw)
- It is critically important that anti-inflammatory drugs/medicines are avoided; *anti-inflammatories will counteract PRP’s intended effects!*  
  - Corticosteroids (e.g. prednisone) must not be taken for 2 to 3 weeks before the procedure.
  - Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) must not be taken for 1 week prior to the procedure and at least two weeks afterwards. Examples of NSAIDs include but are not limited to:
    - Aspirin
    - Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
    - Naproxen / Naprosyn (Aleve)
    - Celecoxib (Celebrex)
    - Meloxicam (Mobic)
- No anticoagulant (e.g. warfarin, Coumadin, Lovenox etc) use 5 days before the procedure

Post-Injection:

- Immediately after the injection, the area is immobilized for 10-15 minutes
- After immobilization, patients should rest the area for 24 to 48 hours
- Since the intention of the treatment is to stimulate a controlled inflammatory response, PRP injections are often more painful than other injections. You may feel the area has been reinjured. During this time, which can last for a few days up to a couple weeks, activities can resume as tolerated. Ice and acetaminophen may be used
- After a period of time (days or longer), various exercises are introduced, as directed by your physician
- Symptom improvement can occur within a few days but may take several weeks
- Repeat injections may be performed if symptoms have improved but not resolved. If no improvement occurs after one properly performed procedure, additional injections are unlikely to be helpful.
- Physical therapy / rehabilitation is often necessary to optimize treatment
At an appointment prior to the procedure date, the patient will be evaluated by Dr. Mahooti who will perform an ultrasound scan of the affected body part and determine the nature and extent of tissue injury / damage. If PRP is a viable option and the patient chooses to pursue it, the patient will schedule a follow-up appointment for the procedure. At that follow-up visit:

- The Medical Assistant will draw some of the patient’s blood and place it in a centrifuge

- After a few minutes of centrifugation, the platelets are drawn from the test tube and prepared for injection

- The body area is prepped with antiseptics to reduce the risk of infection / contamination

- Under direct ultrasound guidance, the PRP is injected with great accuracy into the affected region

- Total time in the office is typically 60 minutes or less

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**a)** A small amount of the patient’s blood is drawn in the doctor’s office.

**b)** The blood is centrifuged to separate out the various components and concentrate the platelets.

**c)** The platelet-rich plasma is prepared from the centrifuged blood.