

PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma) Information

What is PRP?

PRP is an **experimental technique** where blood is extracted from a vein (just like a regular blood test), then spun down to extract a platelet layer and its surrounding plasma. This platelet rich plasma is then injected into the painful area where there is poorly healing tissue. As the platelets adhere to the tissue, they release a variety of growth factors which may improve tissue healing.

What conditions benefit from PRP and when can I expect improvement?

PRP is most appropriate for degenerative change in the knee and tennis elbow, but can be used for a number of other degenerative conditions. Patients report if there is improvement, it occurs over several months. However, not all patients experience improvement.

What will happen during the injection?

During the procedure, a needle is inserted into the arm and 15ml of blood is extracted. This blood is centrifuged (spun at high speed) to separate out the platelets and plasma which are placed in a separate syringe. After the injection site is sterilized, the platelet rich plasma is injected into the affected area, usually a joint. This has to be done without anaesthetic, so it may be painful. There are no real restrictions on activity following this, but you may be sore for a few days. The pain is due to the inflammation generated by the platelets, and is a normal part of the healing response. However, if it is severe, contact your doctor for pain medication, which is not an anti-inflammatory.

What if I am taking an Anti-Inflammatory or NSAID like ibuprofen or naproxen?

You should discontinue the use of anti-inflammatories for at least one week before and two weeks after the injection, except for cardiac patients taking aspirin.

What are the risks of PRP?

The usual complications from blood extraction and injection can occur, including bruising and the rare occurrence of infection, which must be treated. There is a remote possibility of reacting to the injection into the joint, which could cause pain and will improve on its own within a few days.

What is the cost of a PRP injection?

This procedure is not covered under MSP. The procedure requires single-use specialized syringes and a centrifuge. The procedure costs \$500, which covers the cost of these materials and equipment. Third party insurance coverage may provide reimbursement. Please check with your individual plan provider.