



PRP Treatments Available for Patients at Sports Orthopedics and Spine

An exciting new treatment is available for patients who suffer from acute and chronic problems with tendons, ligaments and muscles. This treatment is known as **PRP** or “**platelet rich plasma**” injections.

PRP actually allows injured and diseased tendon to heal with healthy, new tissue. How does that work?

The process involves drawing the patient’s own blood, removing the platelets from the blood, and then injecting the concentrated platelets into the tendon. This is done under ultrasound guided needle placement ,allowing precise location of the PRP into the injured area. By concentrating the platelets in a small volume, the natural biologic process of healing is “accelerated”.

The platelets become “activated” when injected into injured tissue and release substances that are known as “growth factors” that lead to tissue healing. The growth factors recruit cells that will eventually become new tendon, ligament, or muscle. These growth factors have been shown to lead to the healing of tendons, something no other treatment can claim.

This technology has been used for years in facial surgery to aid in healing. PRP treatments for inflamed tendons in various parts of the body have been used for years in Europe to treat such problems as tennis elbow, Achilles tendonitis, and patellar tendonitis.

“The medical literature and outcome studies in athletes in Europe tell us that this treatment does work,” according to Henry Stiene, MD, a sports medicine specialist who performs the procedure. “Other than the discomfort from the blood draw and injection, there is really no downside to the procedure. Platelets are bactericidal so infection with this treatment is rare, and we are using the patient’s own blood, so acceptance by the patient is high. The injection does not provide the instant relief that a corticosteroid injection does, but the big difference is that PRP can actually heal the tendon over a period of time while corticosteroids only stop the inflammation.” The success rate is extremely high and does not preclude or alter any surgical procedure in the future if needed.

Common conditions that can be treated with PRP include tennis elbow, Achilles and patellar tendonitis, partial tear of the rotator cuff, quadriceps, and other tendons, plantar fasciitis, and injuries to other tendons and ligaments. PRP has also helped patients who have a chronic pain after their surgery.

Most patients will need 1-3 injections spaced about 3 weeks apart. The PRP injection process takes about an hour and is performed by Dr. Scott Johnson at Sports Orthopedics and Spine’s main office in Jackson, Tennessee. Most insurance companies will approve the procedure after pre-authorization.