

Knee Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) Injections

Common Questions



**More information can be found on
Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com**

WHAT IS PLATELET RICH PLASMA (PRP)?

Platelets are cell fragments found in blood that have several roles in your body. Platelets are most commonly known to assist in clotting blood. They also play a role in your body's reparative processes. Platelet rich plasma (PRP) is made up of high concentrations of platelets and growth factors from your own body. When injected into areas of inflammation or tissue damage, PRP can promote healing. An injection of PRP is known to decrease inflammation and may reduce cartilage degeneration in the knee. It is used for a wide variety of clinical applications including a number of orthopedic conditions such as tendonitis and osteoarthritis. PRP is often considered when other treatment options have failed (such as rest, NSAIDs, ice, activity modification, and physical therapy).

HOW IS A PRP INJECTION DONE?

A PRP injection can easily be done in the office with minimal downtime following the injection. First, a simple blood draw is performed in the office. This syringe is placed into a centrifuge and is spun for approximately 5 minutes. This step separates the platelets from the other components of blood that will be discarded. The affected area of the knee that will be injected is prepared and cleaned with a local anti-septic. Ethyl chloride spray is used to topically anesthetize this area with rapid cooling. A rapid-acting local anesthetic such as lidocaine may be injected prior to the PRP. Then, the PRP is injected into the inflamed knee joint. The needle is withdrawn and a sterile bandage is applied to the injection site.

Most recently studies (Ref. 1 – 2) have shown that possibly 2-3 injections to be more beneficial than just one. This can be done as a series of 3 injections, once weekly for a total of 3 weeks.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF PRP

PRP is used for a wide variety of clinical applications (acute and chronic orthopedic conditions) that cannot stimulate tissue healing and regeneration on their own. It can improve function of the affected knee by reducing pain and inflammation, while possibly reducing degenerative changes as well. It is a relatively low risk procedure, as the injection is substance produced from your own body.

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Results of a PRP injection may vary. Effects are typically seen within 2-4 weeks of the first injection. They typically last 6-12 months and can be repeated again if needed. A patient's age, immune status, and severity of condition may also affect results.

PRP VS. HYALURONIC ACID INJECTIONS

There have been some recent studies (Ref. 3 - 5) which have compared the effectiveness of platelet rich plasma and hyaluronic acid injections in patients with adult knee osteoarthritis. The studies showed that injections of PRP could significantly reduce patients' early pain and improve function more than the hyaluronic acid injections at 3 months, 6 months and one year after the injections.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECT OF PRP INJECTIONS?

Side effects following a PRP injection are minimal. The most common side effects are injection site pain, stiffness, and swelling. Less common side effects include: syncope, dizziness, headache, nausea, gastritis, sweating, and tachycardia but these extremely rare.

Although not currently FDA approved for injections, PRP is often used "off-label" and thus not covered by insurance. If you are interested in doing this type of injection, Dr. Stetson's medical assistant Suzie can provide the cost of the procedure to you. She can be reached via email at suzie@stetsonleeortho.com or by calling our office at (818)848-3030.

WHAT IF I HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

If you have any other questions, more information can be found on Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com or just call Dr. Stetson's office, we are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

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