

PLATELET-RICHED PLASMA (PRP)

The body has an amazing capacity to heal itself. When the body becomes injured, a natural healing process occurs to repair the damaged tissue. The body signals platelets and other components in our blood supply to migrate to the site of injury. Under normal conditions, these platelets release a variety of factors that initiate and subsequently promote healing. New advances in medicine have been developed to harness and concentrate these platelets to be precisely introduced to the injury site in an injectable form. The implantation of these platelets from a small amount of the patient's own blood has the potential to "supercharge" the body's capacity for healing.

In order to prepare PRP, blood is taken from the patient. The components within the blood are isolated to produce the PRP through a separating process in a machine called a centrifuge. The entire process takes about 15-20 minutes. When PRP is injected into the damaged area it stimulates the tendon or ligament as well as causing mild inflammation that triggers the healing cascade. This is all accomplished without using any animal products or other foreign material.

Patients can see a significant improvement in symptoms. Patients may experience more pain the first 1-2 weeks after the injection. This is a normal reaction and part of the inflammation that triggers the healing process.

PRP can reduce healing times up to 50%. This may eliminate the need for more aggressive treatments such as long-term medication or surgery, as well as a remarkable return of function.

PRP injections can be performed in muscles, tendons and ligaments all over the body. Some examples include: resistant fractures, muscle strains, ligament sprains, articular cartilage injury, arthritis, acute tendon rupture, and chronic tendinopathy.

While responses to treatment vary, most people will require a series of 1 to 3 injections. Each injection may be spaced several weeks to a few months apart. There is no limit to the number of treatments you can have: the risks and side effects do not change with the number of injections.

If you have a tendon or ligament injury and traditional methods have not provided relief, then PRP therapy may be the solution. The procedure is less aggressive and less expensive than surgery. It will heal tissue with minimal or no scarring, and alleviates further degeneration of the tissues. Your doctor will determine to see if PRP therapy is right for you.

Typically insurance companies will cover the expense of the procedure. The Valley Orthopedic Institute billing department will get insurance approval and then the PRP injection will be scheduled. Patients will be informed about any out of pocket expenses ahead of time.