

Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)

Day Surgery Unit



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet will explain what will happen when you come to the hospital for a PRP injection. The procedure is performed as a day case, so you will go home the same day. Therefore it is important that you understand what to expect and feel able to take an active role in your treatment.

What is PRP?

To develop a PRP preparation, blood must first be drawn from a patient. Blood is made of red blood cells, white blood cells, plasma, and platelets. Platelets were initially known to be responsible for blood clotting; however, they are now known to release important molecules called 'growth factors'. The platelets are separated from other blood cells by placing the blood in a machine that spins at high speed to separate the different types of blood cells. This process is called centrifugation.

The growth factor molecules are known to help bones, ligaments and tendons to heal properly. By injecting these molecules into the injured tendon or ligament, the healing process is improved and the problem gets better over time.

PRP has been used in clinical practice since the 1970's, but more recent studies and advances in technology have demonstrated the benefits of its use in the treatment of common orthopaedic conditions like lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow), osteoarthritis of the knee and many other conditions.

What are the benefits of PRP treatment?

The main benefit is that patients can see a significant improvement in symptoms. This treatment may eliminate the need for more aggressive treatments such as long term medication or surgery, as well as a remarkable return of function and a much shorter recovery time.

A major advantage of this treatment is that the materials used in the treatment are taken from the patient's own blood. Therefore the chances of an adverse drug reaction are removed, making the process completely safe and risk free of any disease transmission.

What are the alternatives?

Alternatives to PRP treatment can include:

- Surgery
- Anti-inflammatory drug therapy
- Steroid injections
- Physiotherapy

What are the possible risks or complications?

As with all surgeries there are risks and complications. These are rare, but you should have been made aware of them before your operation. These can include:-

- Infection at the site of the injection.
- An increase in inflammation and pain at the site of the injection.
- Bleeding and/or bruising.
- No relief or worsening of symptoms.
- Skin discolouration.
- Allergic reaction to the local anaesthetic drug.
- Failure to achieve successful result.
- Injury to the nerves or blood vessels.
- Prolonged stiffness and or pain.

If you require further information about risks or complications, please discuss with the doctors in clinic or on admission.

On the day of the procedure

The procedure will be performed under a local anaesthetic, therefore you will be awake throughout.

Once the blood has been separated, the PRP containing the platelet growth factors is then ready to be injected back into the patient under ultrasound guidance. The PRP will be injected into the site of the chronic injury.

After the injection

After the injection you will be required to rest for a short period of time. Refreshments will be provided. You will have a sterile dressing over the injection site and this should stay in place for 48 hours.

Due to the local anaesthetic, the joint and surrounding area may feel numb after the injection and this may last for a few hours.

It is normal to feel some increase in discomfort in the area for a period of 24–48 hours after.

What to do and what not to do

Use a simple pain killer such as paracetamol for pain relief, however you may ice the area for 20 minutes every 2-3 hours for the first 24-48 hours after the procedure.

It is crucial that you do not use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, Volterol (diclofenac), naproxen etc.

However if you notice any of the following symptoms in the area: swelling, redness or warmth or you feel generally unwell, please contact your GP or local casualty and inform them of this injection.

Unlike steroid injections, to gain the most benefit from the PRP injection it is important that you rest the joint for four weeks. Do not lift anything more than than 2kg (2 bags of sugar) or carry out any repetitive movements which previously aggravated the joint. You will be able to carry out other light activities of daily living as normal.

Will I have a follow up appointment?

You will be invited back to the hospital to be reviewed by the surgeon approximately 2-3 weeks after your injection. It is important that you attend your review so that the surgeon can assess the effect of the injection and provide you with additional advice as appropriate. At this stage you will be referred for physiotherapy to start rehabilitation exercises.

Reference source

- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2609914/>

Contact details

If you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Day Surgery Unit

Telephone: 01483 406783 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

Surgical Short Stay Unit

Telephone: 01483 406828

Out of hours advice

Telephone: Call 111 (formerly NHS Direct)

Website: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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