WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF PRP?

Side effects are minimised by using refined injection techniques and ultrasound guidance. The most common side effect is experiencing a dull ache or mild to moderate flare of existing pain, along with swelling or stiffness. This usually occurs in the first 48 hours following treatment, but can last up to 7 days.

Once the initial discomfort settles, the treatment is typically well tolerated. This is a benefit of the injected solution being autologous, ie derived from your own cells.

Other side effects include bruising or bleeding at the site of treatment, infection or injury to structures such as soft tissues, joints and nerves. Pools and spas must be avoided for 24 hours post injection to minimise the risk of infections.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS PRP?

Many clinical trials have assessed the efficacy of PRP therapy. The outcome of this treatment is influenced by a number of factors, including the quality and number of each patient's platelets (related to health status, smoking, age, medications etc), the condition being treated and the preparation of PRP being used (number of platelets and white blood cells). These variables make it challenging to compare results of studies and develop standardised protocols.

Use of PRP in the management of knee osteoarthritis and tennis elbow has been studied extensively, and has been shown to be safe and effective. PRP shows promising results in other conditions. Research is occurring worldwide to help refine protocols.

TREATMENT APPROACH

Platelet rich plasma is ideally part of a holistic treatment plan. Outcomes can be optimised by looking after your health and wellbeing and improving your immune response. This includes adequate nutrition, hydration, sleep, physical activity and stress management.

After a 4-day pause, continuation of strengthening and general exercises is encouraged. Your doctor will advise on temporary modifications to your physical rehabilitation program. Modifications may also be advised regarding any treatment you are receiving concurrently e.g. massage, physiotherapy, mobilisation or manipulation treatment.

Behavioural and psychological therapies can be useful to help you cope with pain and loss of function.

Supplements may be recommended (vitamins & collagen) to boost the treatment response.

SMART HEALTH

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Orthobiologic Therapy

Platelet Rich Plasma

A technique using the plasma and cells from your own blood to stimulate healing in soft tissues and joints.

A regenerative, non-surgical approach to managing osteoarthritis and musculoskeletal injuries.

SMART HEALTH

WHAT IS PRP?

Blood carries out many important roles, including transporting nutrients and oxygen to cells, and getting rid of waste products and carbon dioxide. It is also essential in the function of the immune system and healing.
Blood is made up of:

- plasma (the liquid part)
- cells (red cells, white cells and platelets)
- proteins
- minerals

Platelets are small cells in our blood which live for 7-10 days. They contain clotting factors and growth factors which trigger the immune system to initiate healing and repair.
Certain types of white cells, proteins and minerals are also important in tissue healing and repair.
Some tissues, such as tendons, ligaments and joints, have a poor blood supply, making it hard for enough platelets and nutrients to reach areas needing repair.

In platelet rich plasma therapy, your blood is centrifuged (spun at high speed) to separate the red blood cells from the plasma and the platelets.
The plasma (containing a concentrated number of platelets, proteins and some white blood cells) is then injected to the area needing healing.
Once injected, the platelets activate and release their clotting factors and growth factors, triggering an inflammatory response that leads to healing and repair.

TREATMENT SCHEDULE

Before treatment is commenced, an initial assessment is done by your doctor to decide if PRP is suitable for you. This typically includes providing a medical history, undergoing a physical examination, and, in some cases, having an X-ray, scan or blood tests.
Please let your doctor know if you are on medication to thin your blood (eg warfarin, xarelto, aspirin or clopidogrel)
Anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin, ibuprofen, diclofenac and meloxicam, will need to be ceased for 7-10 days prior to your treatment. Your doctor will provide instructions accordingly.

If you are unwell with a viral infection or other illness, have had a cortisone injection or vaccination you will need to defer the procedure for 2-4 weeks.

PRP is a regenerative therapy so it may take a few weeks before improvement is noted. Depending on the condition being treated, you will usually require between one and three treatments.

WHAT CONDITIONS CAN BE TREATED?

PRP can be used to treat a number of conditions, some of these include:

- Osteoarthritis - knee, hip, toe, thumb etc
- Low back and sacroiliac joint pain
- Shoulder pain and rotator cuff injuries
- Tennis elbow
- Achilles tendinopathy and plantar fasciitis
- Joint laxity and instability (hypermobility and connective tissue disorders)

TECHNIQUE

On the day of treatment, blood is taken from your arm (30 - 120 ml) and is spun in a centrifuge for 5-10 minutes.
The area to be treated is marked and the skin is cleaned with antiseptic solution. If needed, the overlying skin can be numbed with an injection of local anaesthetic.
The prepared PRP is then injected directly to the injured ligament, tendon or joint under ultrasound guidance.

AFTER TREATMENT

Please avoid anti-inflammatory medications and physical activity for 4-7 days after your treatment. General activities of daily living and short walks around the block are permissible.

This is very important to consider when planning the timing of your treatment and scheduling of appointments. Your doctor will discuss with you which exercises and activities to avoid after treatment to ensure the best outcome.

Post-treatment discomfort is due to the inflammation caused by the injections to help stimulate the healing process. It is temporary and usually well controlled with simple pain relief medication such as paracetamol, codeine or tramadol.

Ice packs can be used on the day of treatment to soothe injection soreness. Heat packs and gentle walking and mobilisation are preferable, to help encourage blood flow to the area and control stiffness and discomfort.