

PRP Treatments Available for Patients at Beacon Orthopaedics.

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.

Common conditions that can be treated with PRP include tennis elbow, golfer’s elbow, achilles, patellar, and quadriceps tendonitis, partial tears of the rotator cuff and other tendons, plantar fasciitis, carpal tunnel, Dequervain’s tenosynovitis, trigger fingers, as well as partial tears of the hamstrings, quads, as well as other tendons and ligament. PRP has also helped patients who have chronic pain after their surgery

There are many treatment options available for these maladies including rest, anti-inflammatory medicines, physical therapy, bracing and corticosteroid injections. Many of these treatments have not provided long lasting relief and **none** actually cause the tendon to heal. Those that suffer chronic pain may eventually need surgery and even then may continue to have problems because a diseased tendon may not always heal normally after surgery.

PRP actually allows injured and diseased tendon to heal with healthy, new, tissue.

How does that work?

Platelets are components of blood that cause it to clot. The platelets become “activated” when injected into injured tissue and release substances that are known as “growth factors” that lead to tissue healing as witnessed by anyone that has ever suffered from a cut on the skin. These growth factors have been shown to lead to the healing of tendons, something no other treatment can claim. The growth factors recruit cells that will eventually become new tendon, ligament, or muscle.

The process involves drawing the patient’s own blood and then 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.”

This technology has been used for years in facial surgery to aid in healing and also in other tissue grafts for the same purpose. 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. It has also been used successfully in the US for the treatment of plantar fasciitis.

“The medical literature and outcome studies in athletes in Europe tell us that this treatment does work,” according to Dr. Henry Stiene, MD, a sports medicine specialist at

Beacon who performs this procedure. “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, and do not cause the tendon to heal and over time can actually weaken the tendon.” Chronic inflammation weakens the muscle that is attached to the tendon. Coupled with a few simple exercises that stretch and strengthen the tendon, most patients can expect to do well. An MRI or orthopaedic ultrasound may be done prior to the injection to insure that there is not a major tear in the tendon that might best be treated surgically.

Corticosteroids or “cortisone” as they are commonly referred to cannot be injected into weight bearing tendons such as the patellar tendon of the knee and Achilles tendon of the ankle because they can weaken the tendon and can cause it to rupture and because of this treatment for these problems has also been limited. PRP can be safely injected into these tendons without the risk of rupture.

Tendons many times have a relatively poor blood supply and therefore have a limited capacity to heal. “I believe that over time, it will be found that PRP may not be for everyone, especially in those that have conditions that limit blood supply to a tendon such as smokers and poorly controlled diabetics and those who do constant repetitive motion with the elbow and wrist as required for their job. For most patients, however, PRP does offer a solid, alternative treatment for most who wish not to have surgery” states Dr. Stiene.

These treatments have been successfully performed in professional, collegiate and high school athletes at Beacon Orthopaedics. Its highest utility, however, has been in those patients who suffer from chronic tendonitis and overuse syndromes attributed to everyday life and activities.

Most patients will need 1-3 injections spaced about 3 weeks apart. The PRP injection process takes about an hour and is performed at Beacon’s Summit Woods location. With the exception of Medicare and Humana, most insurance companies will approve the procedure after pre-authorization.

“Other than the discomfort from the blood draw and injection, there is really no downside to the procedure,” says Stiene. “Platelets are bactericidal which is why when you skin your knee it rarely gets infected, so infection with this treatment is rare, and we are using the patient’s own blood, so acceptance by the patient is high. The success rate is extremely high and does not preclude or alter any surgical procedure in the future if needed.

*For more information on PRP and to view Power Point Presentations on the procedure please go to www.Beaconortho.com and click the link to “**Education.**” You will find a heading labeled “**Brochures**” which will review the procedure in its entirety and will answer all of your questions.*