

Bronson Sports Medicine Specialists

Platelet Rich Plasma Injection

You are having pain or swelling in your joint, tendon or ligament. Your provider would like to treat this with a platelet rich plasma (PRP) injection. Your blood is made of a liquid called plasma and several types of blood cells and platelets. Platelets are important for blood clotting and contain a lot of proteins. These proteins may help with tissue repair and rebuilding.

PRP is considered an experimental treatment by the FDA. The benefit of PRP is being studied. Early studies show promise in reducing pain, joint stiffness and function. You may or may not have this effect with PRP.

What is platelet rich plasma?

Platelet rich plasma is plasma with more platelets than normally found in blood. This increase in platelets may help speed up the healing process.

We will draw a small amount of your blood. The platelets will be separated from the other parts of the blood. Then the platelets will be injected into the area that is injured. This whole process will take about 30 minutes.

PRP may help reduce the swelling and progression of osteoarthritis. PRP may trigger growth of new cartilage. It may reduce pain by increasing the amount of natural lubricating fluids in the joint.

What can PRP be used to treat?

- Joint injuries
- Ligament, cartilage and tendon injuries
- Back and neck pain
- Osteoarthritis

Potential Benefits

- Decreased pain
- Increased function
- Short recovery time compared to surgery
- Cost effective
- Targeted and fast healing
- Quick results with long term benefits
- Improvement without joint replacement

Will my insurance cover PRP?

Most insurances consider this treatment experimental and do not cover it. You will need to call your insurance carrier to see if they will pay for PRP. If your insurance carrier does not cover PRP, you will be required to pay for the procedure prior to being scheduled. In some cases, HSA and FSA accounts may be used to pay for the treatment.

What do I need to do to get ready for PRP?

- Stop taking garlic, ginseng, ginkgo biloba, green tea, vitamin E, zinc and turmeric a week before PRP.
- Drink plenty of fluids to make sure you are well hydrated before this procedure.
- You can eat before you come for PRP. You do not need to be fasting.
- Wear comfortable clothes.

What care will I need after my injection?

- RICE therapy – rest, ice, compression and elevation for pain relief.
- Do not take medicines like Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Naproxen for at least two weeks after PRP.
- Check with your regular doctor about taking blood thinners while getting PRP.
- You can take Tylenol™ or pain medicine as prescribed.
- Physical therapy may be ordered.
- Most people are able to return to work or school the same day or the day after PRP.

What can I expect with PRP?

- The injection site may be painful.
- The site may be red, hot, swollen and painful for the first couple of weeks. This discomfort can be managed with Tylenol™.
- Physical therapy (PT) will be ordered to help regain motion and decrease pain.
- Within 2-4 weeks, most patients start to have improvement in their pain and can start increasing their activity. PT will help to improve strength and activity.
- The goal is to have you 25-50% better in 6 weeks. Sometimes, it may take longer.
- Within 4-8 weeks, you should be progressing back to normal activity.
- Within 3-6 months, your doctor may be able to see changes on ultrasound.
- Within 9-12 months, your doctor may be able to see changes in your MRI or x-ray.