

Image guided injection of platelet-rich plasma (PRP)

Patient information

This patient information sheet should answer any questions you have about your procedure. If you still have questions after reading this, you can visit the Diagnostics section of our website www.theholly.com, telephone the Diagnostic Centre on 020 8936 1202 or email diagnostics@theholly.com

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections use the patient's own blood platelets to promote healing of wounds and soft tissue disorders, as an alternative option to surgery. PRP injections have been successfully used to help heal muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints.

Platelets come from the cells in our bone marrow and are a component of the blood, along with red blood cells and plasma. In order to undergo PRP injections, the patient's blood is drawn into a tube which is then "spun" or centrifuged to create the platelet-rich plasma. The platelet-rich plasma is then injected into the injured area under local anaesthesia. Ultrasound imaging may be used to guide the injection. The concentrated blood components are rich in cytokines and growth factors which are released into the injured area gradually repairing the injury by

increasing collagen development. As the collagen develops it tightens and strengthens muscles, tendons and ligaments in the injured area, ultimately healing the injury.

Clinical studies have shown PRP injections to have good results resulting in improved function and decreased pain.

Please note that PRP injections cannot be used to treat osteoarthritis.

Will PRP cure a tear in my muscles, tendon or ligament?

PRP has been shown to heal tears in a large group of patients, if the tear is contained and not more than 2cm in size.

How do I know if my painful joint can be treated with PRP?

Your Consultant will refer you for an ultrasound or an MRI scan. Afterwards one of our Consultant Radiologists (a doctor who is specially trained to interpret diagnostic images) will interpret your test images and decide if a PRP injection could help you.

How is this procedure performed?

This procedure is performed under local anaesthetic (you remain awake). It is very important to let your Consultant and the Diagnostics Team know if you are allergic to any medicines (including local anaesthetics) or on any blood thinning medicines i.e. Aspirin, Clopidogrel or Warfarin, as you may have to stop taking these for up to 7 days before the procedure.

Please bring any previous scans which were not performed at The Holly Private Hospital with you.

On the day of your procedure one of our Consultant Radiologists will perform an ultrasound scan on you. They will also take 10mls of blood from your arm.

The blood is then treated in a special machine to separate clear liquid from cells. This clear liquid is the Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP).

The Radiologist will clean the site to be treated with antiseptic liquid, then numb the skin using a local anaesthetic injection. The PRP is then injected under ultrasound guidance.

We advise you not to drive for 24 hours after having the procedure. Please ensure you have made suitable arrangements for getting home.

Will it hurt?

You will feel a slight sting when the local anaesthetic is injected, much like a bee sting. Once the local anaesthetic has taken effect (usually 2 - 3 minutes), the procedure should be painless. Some patients feel discomfort when PRP is injected into tendons. The effect of local anaesthetic lasts for 4 - 6 hours and the area being treated may feel a little sore for the next 24 - 48 hours. We recommend that patients allow two days to recover. If you work you should book time off to allow yourself to fully recover.

How does PRP work?

There are special proteins in our blood called 'growth factors'. These proteins are like building blocks which can repair small defects that develop in connective tissue. By spinning your blood, the growth factors are retrieved in a concentrated form. Once these are injected in the sites that show defects, they can bridge the gap and help the body to repair the site of injury.

Can we not inject whole blood?

It is possible to inject whole blood, however studies have suggested that injecting PRP alone may be more effective.

Will it work?

PRP injections have been shown to repair contained tears in up to two thirds of patients. Full thickness tears do not usually respond to these injections. Your Consultant will be able to advise you on whether PRP is a suitable treatment for you.

What happens next?

You will usually receive a follow up appointment four to six weeks post injection. A repeat ultrasound scan will be performed and a second treatment may be given depending on the results. After the first injection you will need to see a physiotherapist for advice on how to protect your injected site and prevent any further damage.

It is important that you do not overuse the injected part of the body and do not take part in sporting activities for these four to six weeks.

Will I need surgery?

We need to look at how well you respond to the PRP injection and do some further tests before deciding if you need surgery.

Is this a new technique?

PRP has been used for around five years. The Consultant Radiologist using this technique at The Holly Private Hospital has been using it at his NHS hospital. The procedure will be recorded and will be audited in accordance to the guidelines of National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Is the procedure covered by my insurance?

Most insurance plans cover cost of the procedure but are unlikely to cover the cost of the blood separating equipment, which incurs a cost of approximately £100.

Important information for patients paying for their own treatment

We respectfully request that your account is settled either by insurance authorisation or payment at the time of your appointment. A fee may be charged for non-attendance or if less than 24 hours notice is given to cancel an appointment.

Further information

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further queries. You can telephone the Diagnostic Centre on 020 8936 1202 or email diagnostics@theholly.com. Alternatively you can visit the Diagnostics section of our website www.theholly.com

If you would like a copy of this information in large print or an alternative language, please call 020 8936 1214.

Please note we are unable to provide child care facilities during your examination and in most cases children will be unable to accompany you into the examination rooms.

Call: 020 8505 3311 (Main Switchboard)
Call: 020 8936 1202 (Diagnostic Centre)
Email: diagnostics@theholly.com
Visit: theholly.com

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