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BOARD CERTIFIED, PHYSICAL MEDICINE & REHABILITATION

Instructions Prior To Platelet Rich Plasma Injections

- Stop taking all anti-inflammatory medications for one (1) week before procedure, except for baby aspirin taken for the heart. This including Naprosyn, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Naproxen Sodium, Cortisone-like drugs, Relafen, Motrin, Advil, Aspirin products, Vioxx, Celebrex, and Nuprin. **Stop at least ONE (1) WEEK before injections, preferably longer.**
- **Tell us in advance if you are taking blood thinners (e.g. Coumadin) or if you have allergies to fish, corn, sugar, anesthetics, latex or painkillers.**
- Eat a light meal one to two hours prior to your treatment.
- ****Drink plenty of water the day before the procedure and the day of the treatment.****
- You can take Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or prescribed pain medication prior to treatment as long as it isn't an anti-inflammatory (see above)
- We strongly encourage you to decrease or quit smoking as it will likely impair the healing process.
- We recommend taking an anti-anxiety medication for this procedure. If you are anxious, please let us know in advance; we may provide a valium or other anti-anxiety medication for you prior to the procedure to make it go more smoothly for you.
- If you did receive a valium for this procedure, you should take it upon arrival at our office and make sure you have a driver with you. Unless you are nervous about the blood draw, then you should take the valium 10 minutes before your arrival.

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Instructions Following Treatment

- **DO NOT take anti-inflammatory medications before or after the injections.** Similarly, some herbal supplements can have an anti-inflammatory effect; ask us about these. Please try to refrain from anti-inflammatories for two (2) weeks after the injection.
- You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) or other approved medications of relief of injection pain following treatment. Please note that for most individuals the safest maximum level of Tylenol is 4,000 mg per day. If you have a history of liver issues or consume 3 or more alcoholic drinks a day, a lower maximum dose should be used.
- You should use heat for soreness (heating pad, warm moist towel, hot shower or bath). However, refrain from the use of ice during the first week and longer if possible, as it may impair healing as it decreases blood flow.
- After the injected anesthetic has worn off (usually in a few hours), you likely will have temporary increase in stiffness and pain. Not only is this expected, but it is also necessary to signal the start of the healing process. This should last only one to three days. Some patients experience episodes of pain during the first two to three weeks after treatment. This is normal and should not cause alarm. **Drinking water following treatment will decrease pain and improve cell function.**
- Depending on your job and the areas treated, you may be advised to reduce your activities after treatment, but as a rule, you are encouraged to return to your usual activities as soon as you feel able. Avoid strenuous activities and/or sports on the day of your injection as the area is numbed and the normal pain response is blocked for a few hours. Generally, within 2-4 days most patients resume a normal routine, but there is a wide variety of responses to these injections. Some patients seem to experience fairly significant pain, while others do not notice a great deal of discomfort. Inactivity will decrease optimal results.
- Treatment is intended to provide you with a long-lasting relief of your pain. In many cases your pain will be greatly diminished and not return unless you re-injure yourself. Some patients are healed with only one treatment while others, with more chronic or difficult problems, require more treatments. Each treatment builds on the previous one and too much time between treatments may slow improvement. Complete relief of pain cannot be guaranteed.
- Pain relief is usually first noticed at two to six weeks following the injections but may take up to 3 months to notice full benefit. Joint strength and stability will increase with each treatment and continues for one to three years after the last treatment. The process of healing, increasing joint strength and pain relief is gradual and patience is required to realize the benefits of regenerative injections.
- **Quitting smoking will help maximize the effect of the tissue healing.** Due to the carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke, the oxygen needed for the tissue healing is deprived to the stimulated area, making a less desirable environment for the area to heal. It also leads to decreased blood flow and nutrient delivery to the healing tissue.
- You can resume your previous activities as soon as tolerated. Avoid high impact activities on the areas treated. You are encouraged to exercise in order to strengthen areas of weakness and for general fitness. The more active and fit you are, the quicker and easier your recovery will be.

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Regenerative Injections: Frequently Asked Questions

What are regenerative injections?

Regenerative injections are well-recognized procedures that stimulate the body's natural healing processes to strengthen joints weakened by trauma or over-use injury. With a precise injection of a mild irritant solution directly on the site of the torn or stretched ligament or tendon, regenerative injections create a mild, controlled injury that stimulates the body's natural healing mechanisms to lay down new tissue on the weakened area. The mild inflammatory response that is created by the injection encourages growth of new ligament or tendon fibers, resulting in a tightening of the weakened structure. Additional treatments may be necessary to repeat this process, allowing a gradual buildup of tissue to restore the original strength to the area (this is variable and dependent on the problem).

Some examples of different types of regenerative injections:

- Prolotherapy
- Platelet-rich plasma injections (PRP)
- Stem cell injections

Do the injections hurt?

The use of a needle is always accompanied by some degree of discomfort. It varies from patient to patient, but is usually well tolerated. It helps to stay very relaxed by not tensing the muscles and focusing on deep breathing. A local anesthetic is used to numb the skin and decrease discomfort. Post-injection pain and stiffness is normal and to be expected, as it signals that the body's inflammatory process has been activated.

Are there any risks?

Anytime a needle is used to penetrate the skin into the deeper tissues, there is always the chance that inadvertent puncture of arteries, nerves, spinal fluid or lung tissue may occur. Complications are rare and are greatly minimized by the skill of the well-trained physician. However, since it is a procedure with some risk to the patient, all patients are asked to read and sign a consent and waiver form prior to the procedure. Keep the injection sites clean and avoid hot tubs, swimming pools and lakes for 3 to 5 days following the injection. Showering the day of the injection or the next day is fine.

Should I eat before my appointment?

A light meal and **plenty of water** about 1-2 hours before the procedure and good hydration the day before is recommended. Water improves cell hydration and lessens the discomfort of the injections, while food diminishes the likelihood of dizziness. Patients report even less discomfort when they drink water right up to the time of the injection.

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How many treatments are needed?

This is very individual. Some patients respond quickly to just a treatment or two, but others require more to stimulate the healing properly. The longer the duration of the pain and disability and the more severe and widespread it is, the more treatments will be needed to stabilize joints, ligaments or tendons. After the first session, successive treatments follow at intervals of three to six weeks or longer. Staying on a consistent schedule of treatments will decrease the chance that early benefits are lost.

When will the benefits occur after the injections?

It does not result in immediate relief of pain. Some patients report improvement in as little as two weeks following injections, but it is not expected that any significant relief will be obtained until four to six weeks after the first treatment, and often can take up to 2-3 months to see improvements. Others may not receive much benefit at all until they have had further treatments. As ligament strength and joint stability improve, results become more noticeable with decreased pain and improved function. Improvement may continue for up to three years after the last treatment. For some patients, one treatment will provide a permanent fix.

What can I take for the pain during recovery?

Typically, post-injection stiffness and soreness can be expected and is necessary for the healing process to begin. This will last for the first few days. Heat usually soothes the soreness, but ice will **slow** the healing process and is to be avoided. **No anti-inflammatory (NSAIDS) medications** may be used once treatment begins because they interfere with the healing process. An exception to this is for those who take a baby aspirin for their heart. Regular use of narcotic drugs should be avoided because they will inhibit the immune system and slow the healing. Tylenol may be used for a short period of time. **Remember, it is important to treat the source of the pain through strengthening the damaged areas rather than just cover it up with chronic pain medications.**

Should I exercise following treatments? What should I avoid doing?

Controlled exercise and mobilization of the treated area promotes tissue healing and results in faster recovery after the treatment. For this reason, movement and exercise are recommended as soon as possible. The amount will depend on one's level of fitness before and on how many areas were treated. Massage and other similar therapies are compatible with treatment. Massage with lotion or oils should be avoided for 3 days after injections to reduce infection risk. Physical Therapy can be resumed after the treatment to correct muscular and proprioceptive issues related to the diagnosis.

When should I return to work?

In most cases, depending on the patient's job, one may return to work or school the same day as your treatment. If, however, the job places a great deal of stress on the treated area or if there is significant post-injection discomfort, one should not return to work the same day. A few days is recommended before returning to strenuous athletic activity.

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What is the chance I will get better? Get worse? How long will it last?

Statistics show that 85-90% of all patients treated with regenerative injections receive at least a 50% benefit when treated between two and ten times. There is no evidence of a condition becoming permanently worse from receiving treatments. Also, because actual healing occurs, it is anticipated that long-lasting or even permanent relief of one's pain can take place. If an area is re-injured, more treatments may be necessary in the future.

Where can I get more information?

- Ask Dr. Vlach or Dr. Hedin either on our patient portal or by calling the office and leaving a message.
- <http://www.regenerativemedicineidaho.com/>

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