

What is PRP therapy?

PRP is Platelet-Rich Plasma therapy. Although an emerging technology and technique in sports medicine, it has been used since the mid-1990's in dental and oral surgery and to aid in soft tissue recovery following plastic surgery.

Who has used PRP therapy?

PRP treatment recently gained widespread recognition in the sports world when Hines Ward and Troy Polamalu of the Pittsburgh Steelers received PRP therapy prior to winning Super Bowl XLIII. Other high profile athletes include Tiger Woods who received four treatments following knee surgery and pitchers Takashi Saito and Bartolo Colon •• both recent examples of PRP success in Major League Baseball.

How is PRP administered?

PRP therapy, which takes approximately forty minutes to complete, begins with collection of 30 milliliters of the patient's blood. The blood sample is placed in a centrifuge to separate the platelet-rich plasma from the other components of whole blood. Doctors then inject the concentrated platelets into the site of the injury often using ultrasound guidance for accuracy. Platelets function as a natural reservoir for growth factors that are essential to repair injured tissues. The growth factors that the platelets secrete stimulate tissue recovery by increasing collagen production, enhancing tendon stem cell proliferation, and tenocyte • related gene and protein expression. These growth factors also stimulate blood flow and cause cartilage to become more firm and resilient. PRP activates tenocytes to proliferate quickly and produce collagen to repair injured tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and muscle.

Will I feel immediate results from PRP therapy?

You will notice gradual improvement 2-6 weeks after PRP therapy. Some patients report ongoing improvement 6-9 months after PRP therapy is administered. In some studies, Ultrasound and MRI images have shown definitive tissue repair has occurred after PRP therapy, supporting the proof of the healing process. By treating injured tissues before the damage progresses, surgical intervention may be avoided.

Which injuries are usually treated with PRP therapy?

Injuries treated with PRP therapy include: plantar fasciitis, chronic tendinosis, tendon injuries, Achilles tendon injuries and chronic ankle ligament pain. PRP is also used as an adjunct in foot and ankle surgery of many types to speed the healing process. Essentially any tendon or ligament injury except complete tears may be treated successfully with PRP. PRP therapy is exactly the treatment needed to reduce the downtime of the athlete while also reducing the chance for re-injury or perhaps the risk of a more serious injury that will result in surgical intervention permanent disability.

What is Carolina Foot & Ankle Specialists (CFAS) position on PRP Therapy?

Carolina Foot & Ankle Specialists believes that implementing PRP therapy as a viable procedure may: decrease the progression of more serious injuries, decrease the overall time for healing, and ultimately decrease the overall need for surgical intervention. This promising adjunctive form of therapy holds the potential of healing previously problematic chronic injuries, provide a treatment option for debilitating injuries previously deemed untreatable, and serve as an alternative to surgical intervention.