



MSK MEDICINE TREATMENT – Regenerative Injections

Prolotherapy and PRP injections are designed to improve the function of degenerative joints and their associated ligaments and tendons. They are thought to work by boosting local growth factors to enhance the natural healing process. Clinical improvements typically last into the medium and long term.

In many ways, Platelet Rich Plasma injections might be thought of as a modern refinement of Glucose Prolotherapy. Although both treatments are effective, I tend to recommend PRP injections over Prolotherapy because significantly fewer treatments tend to be required (2 v's 4-6 injections) and the results seem to be a little better as well. Studies have demonstrated significant improvement in pain and function with Platelet Rich Plasma injections for knee arthritis. These improvements tend to be evident within a few weeks and keep increasing out to 12 months. Other studies have confirmed that Glucose Prolotherapy produces lasting pain relief superior to either exercise or saline injections. Improved cartilage coverage in severely arthritic knees has also been demonstrated in a recent double-blinded arthroscopic trial of prolotherapy.

Prolotherapy – this is the original “Regenerative Injection Therapy” and has been used since the 1930’s. It uses irritating injections of a strong sugar solution to stimulate enhanced healing of ligaments and cartilage around joints. It can be transiently painful to have performed and generally requires a series of fortnightly injections to build its effect. However, the joint hardware improvements achieved with prolotherapy tend to last into the medium and long term.

PRP-Injections (platelet-rich plasma) – these are a newer type of “Regenerative Injection Therapy”. They involve drawing some blood off the patient and spinning it down in a special tube to isolate the “platelet-rich plasma”. This PRP solution is then re-injected into the patient’s joint, ligament or tendon to enhance healing.

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