PRP therapy is a promising non-surgical treatment to accelerate the natural healing of osteoarthritis, tendons, ligaments and other soft tissue injuries without significant risk. As an emerging treatment, PRP uses the body’s natural healing ability coupled with cutting edge science and technology to deliver fast healing and long-lasting results to soft-tissue injuries.

What is PRP therapy?

PRP, or platelet rich plasma, involves the use of a portion of a patient’s own blood to encourage healing of injured ligaments, tendons, muscles and even joints. As the liquid portion of blood, plasma contains red and white blood cells, in addition to platelets. The high concentration of platelets acts as a catalyst to grow new soft tissue or bone cells. Essentially, PRP is protein that help repair and rejuvenate tendon and ligament fibers.

Unlike cortisone shots, which sometimes are only a band-aid solution, PRP actually heals the injured area.

How is PRP therapy administered?

PRP therapy is administered through an injection. After extracting one or more tubes of a patient’s blood, the blood is spun using a centrifuge machine to isolate the PRP with growth factors and separate red blood cells from platelets that release proteins. Next, after,topical and injected local anesthetic is applied, the activated platelets are injected in the injured tissues. Depending on the injury, ultrasound may be used to help guide the injection.

How many treatments are needed?

The number of treatments depend on the severity of the injury. One to three treatments is average, although a fourth may be necessary. Treatments are typically spaced four to six weeks apart.

What is the success rate of PRP therapy?

Platelet-rich plasma treatment has a success rate between 60 and 75 percent, and a reduced healing time of 25 to 30 percent, according to the Hospital for Special Surgery.

Is PRP therapy appropriate for athletes?

Just ask Hines Ward, retired all-pro receiver of the Pittsburgh Steelers. When Hines suffered a badly sprained medial collateral ligament while playing in the AFC championship game, he received PRP therapy. Two weeks later he made two successful catches in the Super Bowl.

Is PRP therapy only for athletes?

No. Soft-tissue injuries, tendinitis and osteoarthritis affects everyone. PRP can help speed up healing, provide long-lasting benefits and save a trip to the operating room for many people.

“It’s a better option for problems that don’t have a great solution — it’s nonsurgical and uses the body’s own cells to help it heal,” said Dr. Allan Mishra, an assistant professor of orthopedics at Stanford University Medical Center to The New York Times.

What are some typical conditions treated with PRP?

Knee: instability, partially strained or torn ligaments of the knee (MCL, ACL, or LCL), chondromalacia, meniscus tears, arthritis of the knee

Shoulder: rotator cuff tear, rotator cuff tendinitis, bursitis, bicipital tendinitis, instability, labrum tear, arthritis of the shoulder

Hip: bursitis, psoas tendinitis, Iliotibial band tendinitis (ITB Syndrome), sacroiliac joint dysfunction

Ankle: ankle sprain, ankle tendinitis, achilles tendonitis, peroneal tendinitis, instability

Elbow / Hand / Wrist: golfer’s elbow, tennis elbow, trigger finger, finger tendonitis, arthritis of the elbow, hand, or wrist

Spine: ligament sprain, rib conditions, whiplash injury, arthritis of the spine

Are there any side effects to PRP therapy?

Because the therapy uses a patient’s own blood, there are typically no negative side effects.

Most patients tolerate PRP therapy quite well, although some patients report post-injection soreness. There is a risk of blood vessel or nerve injury when PRP is administered without the guidance of ultrasound.

How long has PRP therapy been in use?

PRP was first used more than 20 years ago to improve wound healing in cancer patients and in maxillo-facial and jaw reconstruction plastic surgery. Its applications have since been extended to other fields of medicines, including cardiovascular surgery and orthopaedics. In the area of sports medicine, PRP has been used approximately 10 years.

At Orthoprp.com, we compliment PRP therapy with the latest advanced techniques, like cytokine therapy, photomodulation, and supplements for cartilage and tendons to deliver the most beneficial results for our patients.