



Spire Regency Hospital, Macclesfield

Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) for Osteoarthritis

What is Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)? PRP is made from your own blood. The blood sample is specially centrifuged and the layer containing the platelets is then isolated. These platelets (thrombocytes) are rich in growth factors and other bioactive substances that will aid the natural healing process in the joint.

What's going to happen when I come in? A blood sample of about 15ml is taken from a vein in your arm. This blood sample is then centrifuged for 5 minutes. The plasma containing the platelets is then withdrawn. Dependent on the joint to be treated you may potentially benefit from an injection with local anaesthetic to numb the area. The PRP is then injected into the joint. You will only need a small dressing to cover the injection site. The whole process will take about 15-20 minutes.

Is it going to be painful? There will be some discomfort from injecting the local anaesthetic, but this will reduce the pain from injecting the PRP. The PRP injection can still be a little bit uncomfortable. Most patients tolerate the procedure well. You may experience some pain in the days after the PRP injection, but normal painkillers will be enough to deal with that.

Possible side effects: Since the injection is made from your own blood, there should be no major side effects. You may experience mild pain/irritation for a few days and there may be some bruising. Normal pain killers will keep you comfortable.

Infection: This is a very rare complication following the injection. If you notice increasing redness, swelling and pain 3-10 days following the injection you should seek advice from your surgeon, your GP or a Doctor in A&E.

Likely outcome: Although PRP has been used for many years and although there is good scientific evidence to support its use, there is no success guarantee. PRP supports your body's own healing mechanisms and it will take time for you to notice the difference. This may take approximately 2-8 weeks. During that time, you should experience a slow improvement in pain levels. A second injection with PRP can sometimes help to improve the outcome, your surgeon will discuss this with you. Patients can potentially experience many months of pain relief following treatment with PRP.

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How many injections will I need? Not every patient responds to just a single injection with PRP. Research suggests that the best results can be achieved when injecting 2 or 3 times.

Restrictions following the PRP injection: You can use your arm for normal light daily activities straight away. You can ice the joint for a few minutes several times a day if necessary. Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous work as well as sporting activities for 4-6 weeks to support the healing process.

Physio: This is important to support the rehab process and to maximise the outcome of the procedure.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication (NSAID's): NSAID's can suppress the effects of the growth factors in the PRP injection. You should therefore stop taking any NSAID's for 7 days before and after the injection. Commonly used NSAID's are Voltarol, Ibuprofen, Nurofen and Naproxen.

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