

Using Your Blood for Natural Healing

Even after having surgery for a sports-related groin injury, recovery was slow for Megan Cortazzo, MD, a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist with UPMC. A fellow physician suggested platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy — and her results were so positive that she now offers the service to patients at UPMC.



What is PRP therapy?

PRP therapy is a type of regenerative injection therapy (RIT) that promotes the healing of injured or deteriorated tissue. “Platelets are rich in growth factors that stimulate healing,” explains Dr. Cortazzo. “We draw a small quantity of the patient’s blood and spin it in a special centrifuge machine. The process extracts platelets, which we then inject at the point of injury or inflammation,” says Dr. Cortazzo.

Who should use PRP therapy?

“PRP therapy’s use by professional athletes has generated tremendous interest in the procedure,” says Dr. Cortazzo.

It also can be an effective alternative to surgery for patients with a wide range of conditions, she says, including:

- Chronic tennis elbow (tendinosis)
- Mild to moderate rotator cuff tears
- Chronic ankle sprains
- Mild arthritis of the knee

For best results, Dr. Cortazzo recommends combining PRP therapy with physical therapy.

Is PRP therapy covered by insurance?

Because it is still in its infancy, medical insurance does not cover PRP therapy. “Although it’s a self-pay procedure, many patients feel it’s worthwhile because it can eliminate lost work time and the cost of a deductible for surgery,” explains Dr. Cortazzo. “Most of all, they want the relief from pain it offers.”

For more information about PRP, call UPMC Rehabilitation Institute at 412-692-4400, or go to UPMC.com/prp.