



Repair, Heal and Regenerate

Accelerate your healing with PRP

by Sondi Bruner

When Barry Roberts* told his family doctor about the knee pain he had developed, he was told to rest and wear a knee brace. But when the discomfort persisted, Roberts knew he needed to do something more.

He contacted his naturopath, Dr. Phoebe Chow, who suggested a new procedure called platelet-rich plasma therapy (PRP). Though he had never heard of PRP before, once he heard that athletes like Tiger Woods had used the therapy with success, the avid golfer was convinced.

"I basically said, 'Let's try it,'" Roberts says. "A few days after, I could feel a difference. Now I don't feel any pain when I'm walking or anything like that. It's quite amazing."

For the last three years, Dr. Chow (www.drphoebechow.com (604) 327-0021) has been offering PRP to patients and has seen successful results in over 25 cases. Platelet-rich plasma can treat acute and chronic pain, arthritis, injuries and joint wear and tear, plus it can be used for facial rejuvenation or to strengthen weak vaginal muscles due to aging or childbirth.

"It's basically tapping into the treasures in the blood," says Dr. Chow. "It's very much in line with the naturopathic philosophy—you're using your own body fluid to heal itself."

What is platelet-rich plasma and how does it work?

The platelets found in our blood are rich in growth factors, which play an important role in our body's ability to repair, heal and regenerate tissues. PRP therapy

was first performed more than 20 years ago and is beginning to gain momentum here in North America for its remarkable ability to accelerate healing. Since its inception, PRP has been applied in numerous fields, and studies suggest that it can help a wide variety of conditions.

"Basically, the body is doing it [healing] anyway—that's what the platelets are designed for," says Dr. Chow. "They get attracted to the site of injury or inflam-

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mation and then release the growth factors and help the body to heal. What we do is enhance and accelerate that process by concentrating the growth factors from the blood and then adding it to the area that is needed."

Dr. Chow applies treatments locally to ligaments and muscles to enhance and quicken the healing process, and she also uses PRP intravenously for an overall "organ tuneup."

"The beautiful thing about the body is it has the wisdom to distribute the growth factors," she points out. "If there are certain areas that are a little bit weaker, then the body would grab the growth factors and then send them to that area."

To perform the treatment, a small amount of a patient's own blood is taken and spun in a centrifuge. The plasma is

separated from the blood cells and the portion with the highest concentration of platelets is isolated. Then, this platelet-rich plasma is injected into the site of pain (Dr. Chow also uses vitamins, homeopathics and ozone as needed). Since the treatment involves patients using their own blood, there's no risk of infection, rejection or contracting a disease.

Dr. Chow has received excellent feedback from patients like Roberts, who found relief from discomfort and pain. Using PRP therapy, she's saved patients from knee replacements, corrected long-standing injuries and improved interminable pain.

"It's such a wonderful thing to see what it can do for a person," she says.

The healing process is gradual, but patients typically notice a difference in pain level and mobility after about three weeks, and after six weeks, the results are complete. And you only need one treatment to see results.

"So far, most people just require one treatment, so people do feel a long-lasting effect," Dr. Chow says. "It's not like massage or acupuncture where you have to do it twice a week for 12 treatments. It's a big layout at one time, but over the long run you actually save money." 🌱

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