

PROLOTHERAPY - TREATMENT INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Prolotherapy.

Prolotherapy is an innovative technique that relieves pain by directly impacting the underlying condition causing that pain. In contrast to many medical treatments that may provide only temporary benefits, this safe, proven treatment can offer lasting relief. Many conditions respond well to prolotherapy, such as tennis elbow, chronic tendinosis and ligament laxity.

How might prolotherapy help you pain and injury? Prolotherapy promotes long-term, sometimes permanent pain relief by stimulating the body's ability to repair itself. A solution of concentrated dextrose and local anaesthetic (steroids are not used) is injected into the affected ligaments or tendons. This solution acts not as a nutrient, but by stimulating the body's natural ability to repair these tissues, encouraging growth of new ligament or tendon fibres. An individual plan is devised with prolotherapy treatments scheduled 3-6 weeks until the healing is complete, and you can return to normal activities without pain. Often, just 2 or 3 treatments are needed. If there is no great treatment effect after 3 treatments then Dr Robertson would suggest that it is not worth continuing, and another treatment should be considered.

How long does it take? The total appointment time takes approximately 25-30 minutes, including administration/form-filling, review of consent/understanding, preparation, treatment and recovery time. Most people return straight to their jobs or usual activities right after the procedure.

What is Prolotherapy?

Prolotherapy is a treatment that triggers proliferation of connective tissue for the purposes of regenerating damaged or weak ligaments, tendons, joints, and bones. Prolotherapy as a treatment

using sugar solution (dextrose 12.5%-25% normally) was first published in 1937 by osteopathic physician Earl Gedney, who discovered the therapy in treatment of his own finger injury.

- Pain with activity, such as repetitive motion injury (eg. tennis elbow)
- Ligament laxity
- Sports injuries
- Tendinosis
- Enthesiopathies (at the point where the end of the tendon joins and attaches to the bone)

What results might be expected?

Initially, mild but temporary swelling and stiffness may occur. Some patients see noticeable improvement after the first sessions are completed, while others realize increasing improvement on each successive visit. Research studies show that over 80 percent of people treated with prolotherapy report a good or excellent result. Many of them are permanently cured. Not only do they enjoy simple pleasures again – a good night’s sleep, sitting through a movie, taking a walk – but reduced symptoms means many also return to physical activities (with all the relevant benefits) such as soccer, mountain biking, jogging, skiing, even horseback riding

Sports Injuries that can respond well to prolotherapy

Prolotherapy can help the injured athlete with chronic injuries, such as sprains, strains, tendinopathy, and tendinitis. Chronic knee and ankle injuries such as found in football and basketball players respond well to prolotherapy. Chronic rock climber shoulder injuries and tennis elbow are also ideal candidates for prolotherapy, and can respond quickly.

What happens following injection?

These injections do cause some aching and stiffness for two to three days. If this occurs, paracetamol can normally be taken for pain relief, but you should avoid taking anti-inflammatory medications

such as ibuprofen or aspirin since this will work against the intended effect of treatment.

In some cases, e.g. with spinal instability, prolotherapy is used in conjunction with exercises such as core stabilising exercises, particularly when core stabilising exercises have not been effective at stabilising the back by themselves. Where the prolotherapy is designed to strengthen the ligaments to increase the stability of the joint, core stabilising exercises are used to strengthen the muscles surrounding the joint to provide additional support to the joint.

Are there any other risks or complications?.

Whilst as with any medical or surgical treatment, there is a risk that the treatment might not work, complications are very rare.

Inflammation around the injection site should be brief and only last a day or so at most

Infection is a small risk with any injection, but again is very rare and quoted as less than cortisone injection (so less than 1 in 10-20,000 injections)

Allergy to the local anaesthetic is also an extremely rare possibility and for that reason, we ask that you remain in the clinic for about 20 minutes following any injection procedures.

Some individuals are susceptible to fainting during medical procedures. Faints result from a sudden short-term fall in blood pressure. Please inform the doctor in advance if you feel this may be likely so that precautions can be taken.

How long to complete a course of treatment?

The response to treatment varies depends upon the individual healing response. Some people may only need a 2-3 treatments while other may need more. The average number of treatments is

3-4 maximum for an area treated. Once you begin treatment, we can get a better sense of how you are responding and give you a more accurate estimate. There are many other tests and treatments that may be recommended for you based on your individualized need. Also, if at any stage you or the physician senses that the response to treatment is proving to be poor, then the treatment plan will be reviewed and revised, with other treatment options - or referral to another specialist being discussed.

Prolotherapy is not experimental:

According to The American Academy of Orthopaedic Medicine and other relevant respected academic bodies in skeletal and sports medicine, prolotherapy is an accepted and established therapy option, and one that is safer and with minimal risk when compared to surgery or some other options. There is a long list of other professional, medical organizations that endorse prolotherapy and neural therapy, found here: <http://www.journalofprolotherapy.com/organizations-that-promote-prolotherapy/>

Evidence and Expert comment on prolotherapy:

For interested patient who wish to read further, here are some recent examples of scientific support for prolotherapy as a safe and often effective treatment option:

Prolotherapy review of the evidence (2016) -

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27429562

Prolotherapy in knee osteoarthritis (2016) -

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27603001

<http://journalofprolotherapy.com/ligament-injury-and-healing-an-overview-of-current-clinical-concepts/>

<https://www.aafp.org/afp/2011/1201/p1208.pdf>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.4137/CMAMD.S39160>