

# Weekend Doctor

By **DR. THOMAS F. VAIL**

Like Tiger Woods and Kobe Bryant, Olympic long-jump hopeful Norris Frederick recently turned to revolutionary platelet-rich plasma therapy to relieve his knee pain. The athlete reported significant relief.

After suffering a knee injury, he was treated with a series of two injections of platelet-rich plasma over four week. The most significant initial subjective findings showed that he had reduced pain and moderate to significant increases in range of motion. Frederick plans to continue his quest for gold at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

A benefit of platelet-rich plasma therapy is that it heals and strengthens tendons and ligaments, strengthening and thickening the tissue up to 40 percent in some cases.



**Vail**

This is different than the effects of Cortisone, which studies have shown may actually weaken tissue. Cortisone shots may provide temporary pain relief and stop inflammation, but they do not provide long-term healing.

I have used platelet-rich plasma injections for heel pain for many years in my practice. Platelet-rich plasma is blood plasma with concentrated platelets.

The concentrated platelets contain huge reservoirs of bioactive proteins, including growth factors that are vital to initiate and accelerate tissue repair and regeneration. These bioactive proteins initiate connective tissue healing: bone, tendon and ligament regeneration and repair, promote development of new blood vessels, and stimulate wound healing.

My patients see a significant improvement in their symptoms and a remarkable return of function which may eliminate the need for more aggressive treatments such as long-term medication or surgery.

Injections can be performed in tendons and ligaments all over the body. Sports injuries, arthritic joints, lower back, degenerative disc disease and more specific injuries including tennis elbow, carpal tunnel syndrome, ACL tears, shin splints, rotator cuff tears, plantar fasciitis and iliotibial band syndrome may all be effectively treated with platelet-rich plasma.

Platelet-rich plasma therapy helps regenerate tendons and ligaments, but it is not a quick fix.

This therapy is stimulating the growth and repair of tendons and ligaments and requires time and rehabilitation. Through regular visits, your doctor will determine when you are able to resume regular physical activities.

If you have a tendon or ligament injury and traditional methods have not provided relief, then platelet-rich plasma therapy may be the solution. The procedure is less aggressive and less expensive than surgery. It will heal tissue with minimal or no scarring and alleviates further degeneration of the tissues.

Talk to your doctor to see if platelet-rich plasma therapy is right for you.

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*Vail is with Advanced Footcare Clinic, Findlay. Questions for Blanchard Valley Health System experts may be sent to Weekend Doctor, The Courier, P.O. Box 609, Findlay, OH 45839.*