



Chronic Tennis Elbow

Regenerative Medicine Almost Halves the Recurrence Rates

Lateral epicondylalgia, tennis elbow, affects an estimated 3% of the population, and is connected to repetitive stress activities.¹ The condition was previously considered relatively benign and self-limiting,² but research has found one-year recurrence rates reaching 72% in usual care groups.³ Epicondylalgia was also previously thought to be primarily an inflammatory condition (epicondylitis), but current science demonstrates that it is more a degenerative process than an inflammatory process.⁴ With the high one-year recurrence rates coming to light and a new understanding of the histopathology, treatment options have improved.



Corticosteroid injections have been found ineffective beyond short-term pain relief, and may even interfere with the effectiveness of physical therapy. Physical therapy has been found to greatly reduce recurrence rates, making it the top evidence-based recommendation for first-line treatment.^{1,3,5-9} Within physical therapy's treatment options, Primary Spine & Rehab practices a manual therapy technique called Mulligan that can improve results and patient satisfaction with more rapid pain relief than conventional physical therapy. A single application of Mulligan technique can immediately increase pain-free grip force and improve pressure-pain thresholds, and with successive treatments, overall pain reduction is more than tripled each week of the first three weeks (compared to usual therapy).¹⁰⁻¹³ Additionally, the dry needling treatment practiced at Primary Spine & Rehab has been shown to create pain relief on par with lidocaine injections.¹⁴⁻¹⁷

When epicondylitis proves recalcitrant to first-line treatments, Primary Spine & Rehab offers regenerative medicine to further increase the likelihood of your patient's success. Specifically, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) treatments for tennis elbow involve the needling of extensor tendons with a serum of concentrated platelets and leukocytes spun down from autologous blood. The most authoritative, long-term study to date finds that, in cases of chronic tennis elbow that has failed usual care, **PRP reduces the rate of significant elbow tenderness 46% (29.1% versus 54%) at two-year follow-up.**¹⁸ Epicondylalgia is largely considered an inadequate healing response, and PRP involves the targeted application of autologous healing factors. So PRP makes for a very logical treatment in chronic tennis elbow. **Ultrasound observations have associated PRP with visible reductions in tendon fissures, reductions in pathological areas, reductions in Doppler hyperemia, and increases in vascularization at the myotendinous junction.**^{19,20}

When you have patients presenting with epicondylalgia, please consider a referral to Primary Spine & Rehab. Primary Spine & Rehab's physical therapy program offers proven-effective advanced techniques that are beyond standard physical therapy practice. For the handful of patients who prove recalcitrant to first-line treatments, Primary Spine & Rehab also offers regenerative medicine treatments to directly address the tendon's failed healing response.

Please offer Primary Spine & Rehab to your patients.



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