

Post-operative care after platelet concentrate injection into joints for degenerative joint disease (DJD)

Intra-articular injection of platelet concentrate is a recent addition to the treatment options for DJD (see separate DJD information sheet). It requires an anaesthetic so that surgical levels of aseptic preparation (precautions to prevent infection) can be achieved. Fur is clipped from the affected joint(s). Fluid is removed with a needle and usually sent to the lab for analysis. Blood is collected from the jugular vein in the neck, and filtered to produce a concentrate of platelets. Several ml of this are then injected into each joint that is being treated.

We have treated shoulder, elbow and stifle (knee) joints with this therapy. Current literature gives evidence that pain is improved, weight bearing is improved and lameness is improved by 12 weeks after injection. No clear data is available for the duration of improvement with this emerging technology, but the hope is that improvements will last many months.

There is often an inflammatory phase for a few days after the injection, and the treated joint may seem warmer and redder than usual.

Medication: **Antibiotics** Antibiotics are not usually required.

Any current medication for DJD can continue.

Anti-inflammatories: **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are often being given for DJD in these patients. It is thought that the inflammatory phase may be important in the process by which the platelet therapy works. So, if possible, we advise avoiding giving NSAID therapy for a day or two before, and for a week or two after the platelet injection.**

NSAID drugs include tablets (eg carprofen, Onsior, Previcox) or liquid (eg meloxicam). These are given with food. They occasionally cause vomiting or diarrhoea, in which case prompt advice should be sought.

Analgesics: Some dogs may be on analgesics drugs like tramadol (tablets given every 8-12 hours). These can be a good alternative to NSAIDs around the time for platelet therapy.

The injection site. There is no surgical wound so precautions and dressings aren't required.

Strict lead restriction is not required. The normal exercise regime advised for the DJD that your pet has can be continued. They may not want to exercise so much in the first few days while there is inflammation, but getting them up a few times a to have a potter about is a good idea with DJD.

Rechecks are recommended a week after the procedure, or sooner if you have concerns. Alternatively, we are available by phone and a text or email photo of the injection site might be very helpful if the inflammation is marked. We'd also like to see the pet 2-3 months after the procedure. We make no further charges for rechecks.

Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy

Encouraging gentle and regular moderate exercise is helpful once inflammation has calmed down a few days after the procedure. Hydrotherapy helps maintain the range of joint motion and muscle mass. Ask your own vet for their recommendation for a hydrotherapy centre in your area.

What does the future hold?

Degenerative joint disease (DJD) is usually progressive so problems often deteriorate with time. Around 50% cases are noticeably improved by platelet therapy by a few weeks post-procedure. Some cases are unfortunately unchanged by this procedure which can be frustrating. Because DJD progresses, it can appear that these cases have deteriorated in spite of therapy. Repeat platelet therapy in the months (and years) after the first treatment is described by the developers of this therapy, and anecdotally has had good results.

Medical management for DJD includes the following:

- weight control
- regular gentle/moderate intensity exercise
- anti-inflammatory drugs
- chondroitin/glucosamine supplements
- hydrotherapy
- physiotherapy

There is more information on our separate DJD information sheet. You might also be interested to read the stem cell therapy sheet. This is a similar procedure but is a little more expensive, and requires two general anaesthetics and the creation of a small surgical wound.

For some joints surgical salvage procedures may be required in time. Joint replacement may be an option for hips, elbows or stifles (knees). Joint arthrodesis (fusion) may be an option for carpi (wrists), tarsi (ankles) or shoulders.

Our fixed prices include any follow up consults and x-rays done with us, but don't include further medication or revision surgery.

For further details please see www.wm-referrals.com, "about us", "FAQs".

For further advice please contact us by phone on 07944 105501 or at enquiries@wm-referrals.com. Consider texting/emailing pictures.