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Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) Joint Injections

What is a Joint Injection?

A joint injection or intra-articular injection involves inserting a needle into a painful joint and injecting a product into the joint capsule itself. This is typically done under sedation or general anaesthesia in dogs and cats.

Why has my Vet recommended a Joint Injection?

Intra-articular or joint injections are used to help reduce inflammation within painful joints. This can be helpful in conditions such as arthritis where excessive inflammation is occurring inside the joint causing pain and damage to the delicate structures in the joint. Unfortunately, there is no cure for arthritis, so treatment is targeted at trying to slow its progression and maintain healthy functional joint.

What is Platelet Rich Plasma?

Platelet rich plasma is a product derived from your pet's blood. It is produced by spinning down your pet's blood in a special centrifuge to provide a concentrated amount of platelets, this processing increases the concentration of platelets by 4-5 times that of whole blood.

How does Platelet Rich Plasma work?

PRP is thought to have a few mechanisms of action

1. Providing growth factors which have been shown to be present in the regulation and synthesis of cartilage thereby improving cartilage health
2. They contain cytokines/chemokines (the body's messengers) and proteins which encourage chemotaxis drawing anti-inflammatory cells and stem cells into the joint to reduce inflammation
3. Other substances such as metalloproteinases etc which have been shown to have an effect on reducing inflammation and help with tissue regeneration

How quickly does it work?

The platelets release most of their growth factors within 24 hours but remain active for up to 7 days. Most cases respond to a one off injection but occasionally the injection will need to be repeated 14 days later. (Most dogs produce 3-4ml PRP from 35ml whole blood so normally 2 additional doses can be frozen for up to 6 months).

Directors
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What do I need to do after my pet has had their injection?

We would advise total rest for the first 7 days after injection followed by short 5 minute lead walks after then. Physiotherapy is essential to get the most benefit out of the injection, ideally an appointment should be made within 7 days of injection. A rehab programme based on your dogs individual needs will be decided at your physiotherapy appointment.

When do I need to see the vet after my pets injection?

We would recommend a follow up appointment 2 weeks after injection, occasionally we would recommend a repeat injection at this stage, if this is the case it is possible to use the stored PRP produced at the first injection.

How much does it cost?

The cost of joint injection varies depending on the joint/s involved. Most of the time bilateral (both sides) injections are performed as most arthritis is a bilateral disease.

Both elbows, shoulders, hocks or metacarpals (toes) cost approximately £980 this includes hospitalisation, sedation, consumables and processing PRP, injecting PRP into the joints and a follow up consultation

Both hips cost approximately £1150 this includes hospitalisation, general anaesthesia, consumables and processing PRP, injecting PRP into the joints and a follow up consultation.

These estimates are based on a 30kg labrador and are correct as of October 2024.

What do I need to do if I am interested?

Please call our reception team (01263) 808999 to make an appointment to discuss your pets case with our vet Helen, she will assess your pet and advise whether she thinks PRP is the right treatment option for your pet.

Take home message

PRP injections are a useful treatment for arthritis and joint degeneration. There is no single treatment that will cure arthritis, the aim with using biological treatments such as PRP is to switch the joint from an inflammatory to a non-inflammatory state. Reducing inflammation will delay the progression of arthritis improving comfort, joint function and quality of life for your pet.

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