

WHAT IS PRP?

NEWCASTLE OCULOPLASTIC SURGEON DR EUGENE HOLLENBACH EXPLAINS WHY HE BELIEVES **REGEN PLATELET RICH PLASMA** IS SUCH A POWERFUL AESTHETIC TOOL. LIZZY WOOD REPORTS.

As we see when we suffer a cut or fall, the body has a great capacity to heal itself. When we're injured, platelets in the blood are activated and aggregate together, releasing granules as they do so. These granules release growth factors, and it's these growth factors that stimulate the inflammatory cascade and healing process.

Whilst medical specialists have been able to harness this capacity in the form of platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections for some time – using them to promote healing in the treatment of nerve injuries, bone repair and sporting injuries for example – it's only relatively recently that professionals have started to explore the many benefits of PRP in aesthetic medicine.

Over the past 10 years, the efficacy of platelet-rich plasma in cosmetic medicine has been widely documented in scientific literature. As a result, today more and more people are turning to it for facial rejuvenation, attracted by the possibility of drawing on the body's own, natural resources.

The RegenLab PRP system uses a patient's own cells to regenerate and rejuvenate the skin, helping to improve the appearance of skin laxity, fill lines and wrinkles and plump areas that have lost volume over time.

According to Newcastle oculoplastic surgeon Dr Eugene Hollenbach there are three main instances in which he may prescribe Regen PRP to his patients.

'As well as being used as a primary procedure to tighten the skin and address fine lines, Regen PRP can be used to complement other facial rejuvenation procedures such as laser resurfacing, dermal fillers or anti-wrinkle injections,' he says. 'PRP injections are also known to stimulate fibroblasts, which can be useful in someone who is preparing for surgery, and after surgery to facilitate healing and reduce scars.'

Having used Regen PRP for the last four years, Dr Hollenbach believes there is no better tool to stimulate collagen. 'The use of PRP in the cosmetic arena came about by accident,' he explains. 'It had been used in burns patients, and doctors noticed the healing around the ulcers was more than expected.'

Dr Hollenbach explains that autologous platelet-rich plasma is a concentration of human platelets held in a small volume of plasma.

'The platelets carry with them hundreds of growth factors that induce a proliferation of fibroblasts, osteoblasts and endothelial cells, promoting and accelerating healing of hard and soft tissues,' he says.

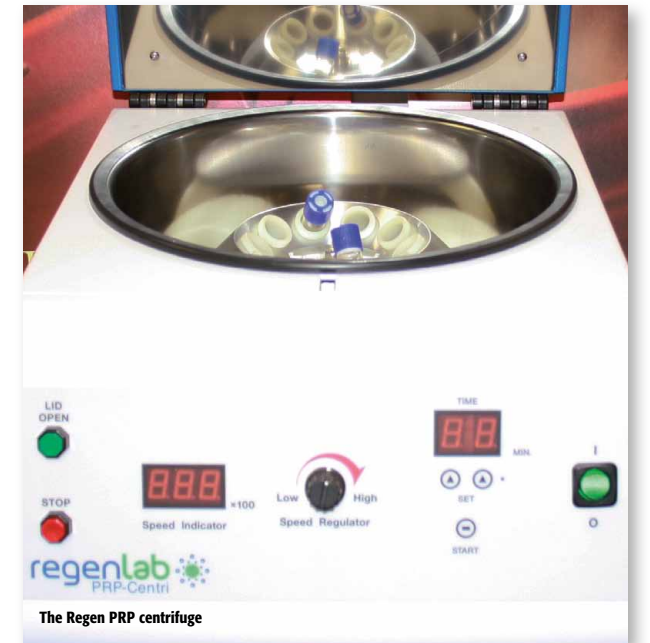
Autologous platelet rich plasma also contains fibrin, fibronectin and vitronectin that act as cell adhesion molecules for osteoconduction and as a matrix for bone, connective tissue and epithelial migration.

'Regen PRP therapy targets the patient's growth factors, before reinjecting them into the patient to stimulate the body into producing new collagen and hyaluronic acid,' summarises Dr Hollenbach.

During a typical Regen PRP treatment, blood is collected from the patient and then spun in a centrifuge in order to concentrate the blood plasma. The platelet-rich plasma is then injected into the treatment area. Depending on the areas being treated, different amounts of plasma need to be collected.

According to Dr Hollenbach, the Regen PRP system bears a number of important advantages over other systems: notably the ability to gather the optimal concentration of platelets, whilst maintaining a low level of red blood cells.

Dr Hollenbach believes many patients are attracted to Regen PRP because they are seeking a more 'natural'



alternative to cosmetic injectables.

'Because the raw material is taken from the patient's own body, Regen PRP is considered a non-allergenic, autologous physiological product as opposed to animal derived or human donor products, synthetic fillers or neurotoxins,' he says.

'Because it is autologous, Regen PRP does not carry risks of disease transmission – a fact that is backed by 10 years of clinical evidence,' he adds.

According to Dr Hollenbach, when being used aesthetically to invigorate the appearance of the skin, patients may benefit from a number of treatments spaced several weeks apart. 'Results typically take between two and three months to appear and, in my experience, the improvement will last for around a year,' he says.

During the procedure, numbing cream or local anaesthetic can be applied in order to numb the area before injection, and patients should expect to experience slight bruising, swelling and redness after the procedure. Any side effects tend to settle over the course of 24 hours.

The longevity of the results depends on the age of the patient, their general health and the condition of their skin, but generally Dr Hollenbach recommends a repeat procedure after one year.

But whilst Regen PRP is ideal for patients looking for skin tightening, or for facilitating healing post-surgery, Dr Hollenbach warns his patients not to expect the results more invasive surgery might achieve. 'For patients with more severe signs of ageing I might prescribe a thread lift,' he explains. 'However, in this instance, Regen PRP before surgery will help form a good collagen framework.'

For Dr Hollenbach, it's this ability to complement almost any aesthetic procedure that makes Regen PRP such a powerful aesthetic tool. **csbm**