



Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is commonly used to treat sports injuries to tendons, muscles and ligaments and can aid in osteoarthritis, joint pain, and post-surgical recovery.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

HEALING THROUGH DIET

Because every pound of body weight that you gain puts five pounds on your joints, Dr. McInerney and his team make every effort to help people lose weight with the goal of reducing surgeries.

“There is a glut of overweight patients in the Western world,” Dr. McInerney explained. “Food selection is huge in the regenerative medicine field, as well as in the orthopaedic field, where we put in joints and do mechanical work. We tell people, ‘We’re not going to operate on you for a total joint until you get your BMI down significantly.’”

To help patients lose weight, which often enables them to delay or avoid surgery and eliminate comorbidities such as sleep apnea and hypertension, Dr. McInerney outlines a straightforward plan.

“We tell them that every three hours during daylight hours they are to drink an 8-to 12-ounce glass of water, and they go to eating six small meals in a day, one every three hours,” he said. “Then you pick the meals that fit in the palm of your hand. Next, we try to cut down on bread and pasta.”

When the topic of regenerative medicine comes up, people often think of stem cells, but Dr. McInerney said the correct term is progenitor cells, which come from fat or lipogems.

“So what you do is you have to harvest them, like doing a fat removal on somebody for a plastic surgical standpoint. It has to be done under anesthesia, usually in a surgical center of some sort, either an outpatient or even a hospital, and they get the fat out similarly to people that get a tummy tuck,” he said. “Then they emulsify that in different solutions and separate out the cells, so they get what they call a progenitor cell layer that is rich in those type of cells that would help to generate things.”

While cleared by the FDA, these procedures are not covered by Medicare or

other insurance providers, yet Dr. McInerney said “a tremendous amount of money” could be saved if that changes.

MOTION AND MOVEMENT MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Kinesiology, which is the study of the body and movement management, is another area that patients can explore to help prevent injury or promote general wellness.

Dr. McInerney said he’s seen firsthand how something as simple as adjusting the body’s movements can have a significant impact on the joints. The surgeon shared that his father-in-law, a candidate for a double knee replacement, was able to avoid surgery by working with a motion expert who showed him how to properly pivot and place his weight when changing direction. Similarly, working with a kinesiologist can help those who have shoulder issues.

“How do you get out of a chair?” Dr. McInerney asked. “We can show you how to sit toward the edge of the chair, put your legs a little wider apart then you bend your knees about 90 degrees, too far or straightening out too much, push the inside of your knees to rotate your hips downward and stand up. It’s like getting out of a chair without using your arms, and that saves a lot of shoulders.”

For those considering PRP, Dr. Gehrman said it’s important to find a practitioner with a proven track record who specializes in these procedures.

“Make sure you find a center where it’s something that they do frequently,” he said. “The other thing that aids in a lot of these procedures is when it’s ultrasound guided. If you have a specific tear in the rotator cuff, you could use an ultrasound to make sure you pinpoint the location of where you’re putting the injections.” ❖



VINCENT MCINERNEY, MD

Orthopaedic surgeon at
New Jersey Orthopaedic
Institute

Photo courtesy of Vincent McInerney