

AUTOLOGOUS BLOOD INJECTION TO ACHILLES TENDON

You have been referred to have an autologous blood injection to your Achilles tendon. The commonest reasons for this are having tendinopathy or a partial tear in the Achilles tendon.

The procedure involves taking some blood from a vein in your arm (similar to a blood test) and then injecting it directly into the abnormal part of the tendon, using an ultrasound scanner to ensure accurate placement.

You will have some local anaesthetic injected around the site prior to the blood being injected.

This procedure is undertaken with the intent of healing the damaged tendon.

In order to maximise the chances of this being successful, it is important that we respect the body's natural healing times.

Adverse effects

The local anaesthetic will keep you comfortable for between 4 and 8 hours after the procedure. Most people experience some degree of soreness in the injected tendon for the first 48 hours after procedure. Some people experience quite a substantial pain flare.

This is considered to be a normal response and is treated with analgesics (Panadol/ panadeine/ panadeine forte) if required. Usually the mild analgesics are all that is required, but your doctor can provide a prescription for panadeine forte as well. Icing is very effective for this sort of pain.

Adhering to the post procedure guidelines set out below can reduce this soreness significantly.

Complications from autologous blood injection are rare. Bruising and tenderness around the injections site are usually mild. Infection risk is minimised with our technique, but infections have been reported rarely.

The risk of tendon rupture following injection into the tendon is very rare (there has only been one case reported in medical literature).

Consent forms

To ensure that you are aware of the very small possibility of adverse outcomes, your requirements after your procedure and the costs involved, we will provide you with a consent form to sign and return to reception prior to your procedure.

Post injection instructions

1. Gait aids

You should wear a CAMwalker boot or similar and use a gait aid (crutches/walking stick) for the first 10 days following the procedure. You will have discussed with your doctor how this is to be arranged to be most appropriate for your situation.

2. Activity restrictions

You are still able to do all of your normal daily activities, but we would recommend that you avoid any unnecessary stair climbing or walking up hills. You should not do any heavy lifting, particularly if you would have to walk while carrying the load. High impact activity is strictly forbidden in the first 2 weeks. You may have previously been doing eccentric strengthening, but this must be stopped at least until you have a review with your doctor. It is, however, important to remember that complete rest (avoiding daily activity) can be just as detrimental as overdoing things.

3. Increasing activity

You are not to increase your activity level until you have been reviewed by your doctor, which usually occurs 2 weeks after the injection. A general rule is that you should not do anything that would have been painful before the injection until after you have been reviewed.

4. Muscle pain

You may experience some discomfort in the calf muscles and this is commonly due to spasm of these muscles rather than any issues from the injection into the tendon. You can self manage this with massage.

6. Rehabilitation

The key ingredient to success is your rehabilitation of strength and stability. In most cases, this starts after your 2 week review.

If you have any further questions, please discuss these with your doctor.