

TIGER'S PRP TREATMENT

According to Canadian doctor Anthony Galea, Tiger Woods has joined a growing list of elite athletes who have received platelet-rich plasma therapy. The World Anti-Doping Agency permits the procedure as a way to recover quicker from injuries, and the PGA Tour said the treatment does not violate its anti-doping policy.

Some people might confuse PRP with performance-enhancing drugs even though PRP is just part of the athlete's blood being reinjected, explains Frank Stephenson of Harvest Technologies. One gray area, he says, is using PRP to strengthen part of the body to prevent an injury. The WADA doesn't permit injections into muscle for fear it might improve strength.

Galea told *The New York Times* he gave Woods at least four PRP treatments at Woods' home in Florida in early 2009. Galea was arrested last October in Toronto on charges related to the possession of performance-enhancing drugs. But Galea's lawyer says those charges have "absolutely nothing to do with Tiger Woods." —RK

\$500

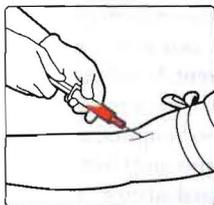
The cost for one PRP procedure at Dr. Michael Scarpone's clinic near Pittsburgh. If the injured area is large, more than one treatment might be needed. Medicare doesn't cover the cost, but some insurance companies do.



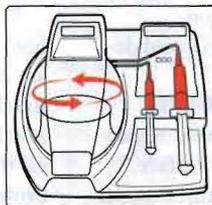
Putting a new spin on injury rehab

Platelet-rich plasma treatments are growing in popularity

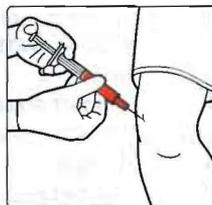
MOST GOLFERS had probably never heard of platelet-rich plasma therapy—known as “blood spinning”—until it was reported in December that Tiger Woods had undergone the procedure to help recover faster from surgery on his left knee. But PRP treatments have been performed for more than a decade and are something golfers should consider for sports-related injuries, including severe tendinitis, plantar fasciitis and muscle and ligament tears, says Dr. Michael Scarpone, team physician for the Pittsburgh Pirates. The procedure takes less than 45 minutes and is performed at hundreds of medical facilities throughout the United States, says Frank Stephenson, whose company, Harvest Technologies, sells the centrifuge machine that spins the blood (*see how it works, below*). Scarpone says it's a great option for golfers 40 and older because they typically don't heal as fast as younger players. —RK



BLOOD IS TAKEN from the golfer's vein near the elbow. About 20 to 60 milliliters are removed.



IN A CENTRIFUGE, platelet-rich plasma is separated from red-blood cells in about 15 minutes.



A CONCENTRATE of platelets, which promote repair and growth, are injected into the injury.



THE GOLFER can recover faster because the healing powers of platelets have been applied to the injury.