

## **Prolotherapy**

Dr. Leyanna Zubach, ND

- Prolotherapy is a treatment that has been practiced since the 1950s. It increases the size, thickness and strength of ligaments (bone to bone) and tendons (muscle to bone).
- Increasing the strength of ligaments stabilizes structures such as the spinal vertebrae and other joints, thereby reducing pain and muscle spasm. The stability of the joint is therefore increased.
- Ligaments are prone to injury as they are the weakest part of our musculoskeletal system. They do not heal well due to poor blood flow.
- Indications for prolotherapy include: musculoskeletal pain lasting more than 6 weeks, failed joint or spine surgery, musculoskeletal pain treated with NSAIDs (Ibuprofen, Advil and the like) or prednisone, only temporary relief with chiropractic, massage or acupuncture, joint pain or swelling aggravated with activity, stress or tension headaches, joint degeneration such as osteoarthritis, back pain associated with disc protrusion, shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle, neck, back and sacroiliac pain.
- Treatments consist of dextrose injections with anaesthetic solution into the ligament or area of pain to stimulate a controlled inflammatory reaction and healing reaction. The local anaesthetic acts to minimize the injection pain.
- The result of the injection is the migration of specialized immune cells to the area to lay collagen at the injection site. Collagen is a primary building block of ligaments, tendons and joint capsules. With time, the treated tissue becomes stronger, thicker and more resilient.
- Research has shown that ligament strength increases by at least 40%.
- Treatment success has been estimated at 88%. This depends on the individual's capacity to heal.
- Removal of NSAIDs (Ibuprofen, Advil) is important as these medications will block healing ability and compromise response to the therapy.
- The average number of treatments is four to six. However, depending on the size of the joint, degree of degeneration, and healing capacity, many patients see results after only one or two treatments. A minimum of three and a maximum of twelve treatments are recommended.
- The recommended time between treatments is two to six weeks, depending on joint size and injury. This allows time for the joint to heal.
- Because the results of prolotherapy are typically permanent, many cases can maintain good results with an ongoing exercise program. However, if causal factors remain which contributed to the joint degeneration, maintenance treatments may be required