How to eliminate joint pain with your own stem cells

Six common questions about how stem cells stop the pain

Regenerative medicine in orthopedics is a non-surgical treatment that activates your own adult stem cells to repair injured tissues, reduce inflammation and stop pain. Here are six things you should know about how stem cell therapy can eliminate joint pain.

1. What causes of joint pain can be treated with stem cells?
   - Arthritis
   - Carpal Tunnel
   - Cartilage Defects
   - Ligament Sprains
   - Meniscal Tears
   - Muscle Strains
   - Nerve Injuries
   - Plantar Fasciitis
   - Rotator Cuff Injuries
   - Tendonitis/Tendinosis

See RegenOrthopedics.com for more conditions treated.
How do stem cells work?

Stem cells are the very basic cells that have not yet decided what final tissue that they will become – such as a cartilage cell, bone cell, muscle cell, etc. We all carry stem cells throughout our bodies that act as the body’s "repairmen." There are several different kinds of stem cells. Mesenchymal stem cells (MSC) are the type that we use in orthopedic treatments. MSCs have the strongest potential to repair muscle, bone, joint and soft tissue injuries. These cells have the ability to self-replicate, reduce inflammation and differentiate into cartilage, bone, muscle and fat cells to help the body regenerate the lost tissue in the injured area.

We find that if these cells are placed in an injured environment, such as an arthritic knee, they are more likely to turn into the cells that the body needs. In the case of arthritis, the cells will recognize that there are cartilage injuries and help to repair the cartilage defects. Also with arthritis, there is an imbalance between the cartilage cell’s (chondrocyte's) ability to build up or turn over normal cartilage because of the increased inflammation inside the joint. The stem cells help to change the inflammatory state of the joint, which not only helps to rebuild cartilage, but makes the joint significantly less painful.

Mesenchymal stem cells have the ability to:

- Reduce Inflammation
- Self Replicate
- Differentiate into Multiple Tissues
- Fight Apoptosis (Cell Death)

What is the treatment like?

For the comfort of our patients, the treatment is done in our surgery center, though it is not a surgical procedure. The patient is put under light sedation. Carefully guided ultrasound is used to find a sample of stem cells or platelets. Typically, they are drawn from bone marrow in the pelvis bone and fat tissue from the love handles.

The sample is then concentrated in a stem cell centrifuge. Using ultrasound to guide the procedure, the concentrated stem cells are injected at the site of the injured joint. It’s similar to a steroid injection. All of this is done in one visit, takes a little more than an hour, and patients are able walk out of the office shortly after.
How long is the recovery?
Patients may feel soreness in the joint treated for three to five days, but are generally able to do normal activities. Most patients will start home exercises or physical therapy about two weeks after the procedure to work on range of motion, balance and strength. Patients can typically get back into sports and exercise at four to six weeks out from the procedure.

What is the success of the treatments?
Success of the treatment depends on the severity of the condition as well as each patient’s own healing potential. Most patients respond well to stem cell treatments and report significant improvement in their mobility and ability to return to activities they enjoy. Many of our patients have had dramatic recoveries from conditions such as arthritis, regaining the ability to walk, dance, run, climb and/or ski again without pain. At very least, the vast majority of patients report a reduction in the pain they had been having. The success rate of your specific condition will be assessed at your initial consultation once we have a chance to review your injury.

How long do patients benefit from the treatments?
If a patient responds well to the treatment, physician experience has shown that most will achieve improved pain and function for a period of three to seven years from the initial stem cell procedure. Success and longevity of the treatment depend on the severity of the condition as well as the individual's healing potential.