

Prolotherapy, also called proliferation therapy is an injection-based treatment used in chronic musculoskeletal conditions. It has been characterized as an alternative medicine practice. [Wikipedia](#)

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy uses injections of a concentration of a patient's own platelets to accelerate the healing of injured tendons, ligaments, muscles and joints. In this way, PRP injections use each individual patient's own healing system to improve musculoskeletal problems. ([See Hopkins](#))

Viscosupplementation: Some call it **Gel Shots** In this procedure, a gel-like fluid called hyaluronic acid is injected into the knee joint. Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring substance found in the synovial fluid surrounding joints. It acts as a lubricant to enable bones to move smoothly over each other and as a shock absorber for joint loads.

Cortisone shots are injections that can help relieve pain and inflammation in a specific area of your body. They're most commonly injected into joints — such as your ankle, elbow, hip, knee, shoulder, spine or wrist. Even the small joints in your hands or feet might benefit from cortisone shots ([Mayo](#))

What are joint injections and does it help with Joint Pain?



Know Your Joints
Muscle and Joint Care
Suggestions

Many of my clients get injections for their joints, but does this help? It is hit or miss with this type of therapy from what I have seen. PRP, Gel, and Steroid injections seem to work temporarily, but they do not solve the problem. ([see more at Cleveland Clinic](#))

Harvard health suggest to skip prolotherapy, an injection of an irritant such as glucose into the knee, which supposedly stimulates the body to start the healing process. There is nothing in scientific literature to support it suggest Harvard Health. It's just sugar water, they say. It does seem to work in tendons though (see [research](#)), but in this research review the authors state that recommendations are more difficult to make for joint osteoarthritis and low back pain, both of which are associated with more complex anatomy and less clear pathophysiology than that seen in tendinopathies. Another questionable treatment Harvard Health suggest is the injection of stem cells into the knee. **Insurance does not cover stem cell therapy or prolotherapy for joint pain.** A treatment that may help they suggest is knee injections of platelet-rich plasma (PRP), a concentrated solution of platelets extracted from your own blood. Platelets contain proteins called growth factors that are thought to stimulate the body's healing response. **But PRP is expensive (hundreds or thousands of dollars per treatment), and insurance doesn't seem to cover it.** Studies show PRP does seem to have an anti-inflammatory effect, but there's not a lot of hard evidence it provides sustained relief. **What is more reliable is injections of steroids (to reduce inflammation) or hyaluronic acid (to supplement the fluid that naturally lubricates the joints aka Viscosupplementation aka gel therapy).** According to research they work about the same. The effects are temporary, but in some patients they can give significant relief until the next shot. **Insurance does routinely pay for these treatments in mostly all the cases I have seen.** The gold standard to treat osteoarthritic knees according to Harvard Health is lose weight and strengthen your muscles (especially the quadriceps in the thighs) with exercise or physical therapy. Both steps can take pressure off your knees, which reduces pain.