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AXIS SPINE NEWSLETTER

Regenerative Medicine

by **E. JOE KENT III, MD**

WHAT IS REGENERATIVE MEDICINE?

According to the National Institute of Health, regenerative medicine is the process of creating living, functional tissues to repair or replace tissue or organ function lost due to age, disease, damage, or birth defects. The field holds the promise of regenerating damaged tissues and organs in the body by stimulating organs to heal themselves.



E. JOE KENT III, MD

Dr. Edward (Joe) Kent III is a fellowship trained interventional pain physician. He believes in a multidisciplinary approach to pain medicine, which includes exercise, diet, and maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle.



JESSICA B. JAMESON, MD

Dr. Jessica B. Jameson is a fellowship trained Interventional pain physician. She is also actively involved in clinical research serving as the principal investigator for multiple randomized controlled trials.

HOW CAN REGENERATIVE MEDICINE HELP ME?

The science behind regenerative medicine has accelerated tremendously in the past few years. With that has come dubious efforts by health care providers (and even physicians) to cash in on the promise this therapy holds and offer therapies that are either not helpful, and/or unsafe. There have been several quality research studies published that show certain regenerative therapies can help treat muscle, tendon, and joint damage, but widespread claims that these therapies can treat or cure diseases such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's have no scientific proof. Often these therapies are given in ways that can cause harm to the recipient.

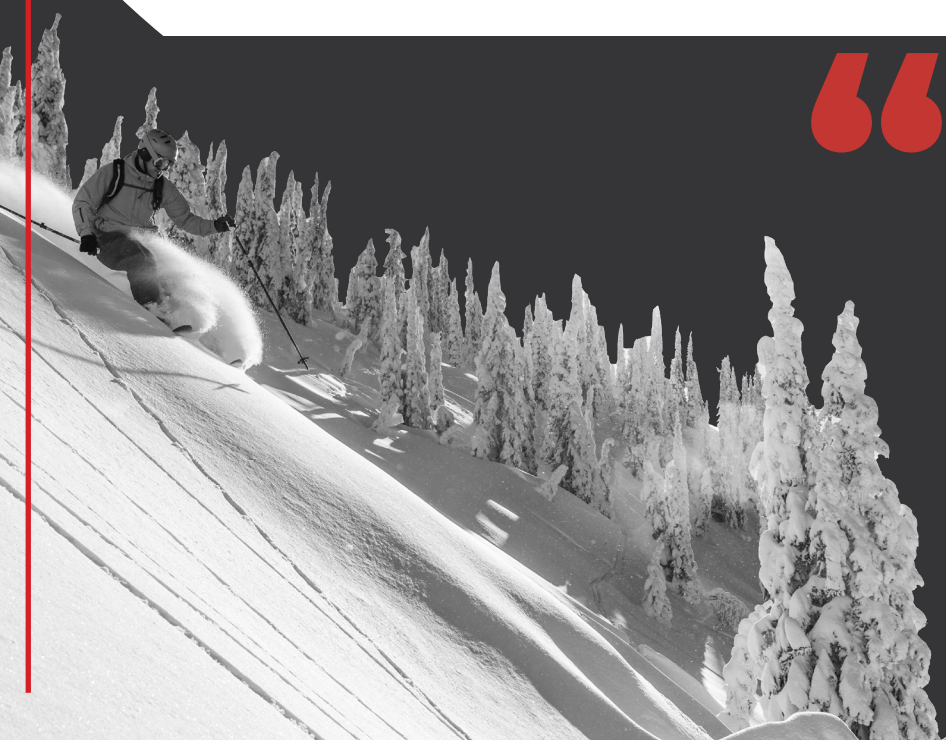
WHAT THERAPIES ARE USED AT AXIS SPINE CENTER?

The physicians at Axis Spine Center only use therapies which have been shown to be beneficial in scientific research and are legal to use based on the FDA's stringent rules regarding regenerative medicine to keep patients safe. These therapies include

platelet-rich plasma (PRP) and bone marrow derived stem cells (BMAC). Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is a technique that concentrates the patient's blood in a way to collect the anti-inflammatory molecules and growth factors to help directly with pain/inflammation and stimulate the tissue to heal by recruiting stem cells to the site of injection. Bone marrow derived stem cell injections are similar to PRP, but they include the actual stem cells that can influence the surrounding tissue to heal.

WHAT OTHER REGENERATIVE THERAPIES ARE OUT THERE?

Some of the other therapies you may hear about when researching regenerative medicine include umbilical stem cells, amniotic stem cells, Wharton's Jelly, exosomes, or adipose (fat) derived stem cells. These products are either not compliant with FDA safety standards and have seriously harmed people receiving the therapy or (in the case umbilical/amniotic cells and Wharton's Jelly) do not actually contain live cells and are simply injections of sterilized proteins. Be careful when seeking out these treatments. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



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WHY WOULD I WANT REGENERATIVE MEDICINE?

Regenerative medicine utilizes your body's own ability to heal itself by concentrating the healing process at the location of the injury. As opposed to steroids, which are great pain-relievers but very damaging to tissue with repeated use, these injections provide pain relief without doing harm to your muscles, tendons and joints. On the other hand, there's only so much regenerative medicine can do at this stage of the therapy. People with advanced arthritis or torn tendons would be less likely to respond to these treatments, so other modalities like steroids, burning nerves, stimulating nerves, or surgery may be the best option.

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