

Health

# Tips on what’s trending in spine and joint pain

Dr. Melfi of Regenerative Spine & Musculoskeletal Medicine can help navigate through pain treatments

Pain is one of the most common reasons adults seek medical care. The CDC guidelines present evidence that both nonopioid medications and non-pharmacologic treatments are effective for chronic pain.

Regenerative injections, including platelet rich plasma (PRP) and bone marrow stem cell injections, are performed at Regenerative Spine & Musculoskeletal Medicine by Renée S. Melfi, M.D.

Dr. Melfi is a physician specializing in non-surgical spine and orthopedic medicine, and has performed thousands of injections since 2002. Dr. Melfi is also certified in

Integrative Medicine and Acupuncture, and offers suggestions to enhance your results with recommendations for proper nutrition and supplements. The following are two of Dr. Melfi’s of Regenerative Spine and Musculoskeletal Medicine’s favorite nonopioid options when it comes to chronic pain: Hemp(CBD)

Dr. Melfi said she is particularly excited about hemp(CBD) in topical form.

“In my practice I find that, within one to two minutes after applying hemp cream, patients will know whether or not the cream is effective for



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them.

Dr. Melfi added that hemp is also available in oral forms. “Typically I would recommend starting topical hemp first, and if results are incomplete I would suggest adding oral hemp.”

Dr. Melfi’s primary concern regarding hemp is that it is trending, and therefore it seems there is a CBD shop on most street corners.

“Hemp is considered a supplement and is not regulated by the FDA,” Dr. Melfi said. “As such, there can be great variability in the quality and type of ingredients in a hemp supplement.”

She recommends research-

ing the product, and reviewing the third-party lab analysis to make sure it has in it what it should, and does not have any unwanted ingredients.

“There are select companies that do not use any fillers,” she said. “I also caution against buying supplements from third party sellers on the internet. There can be counterfeit products and whether there is proper storage of the product cannot be known.”

PRP and “stem cell” injections.

You may have heard about stem cells, platelet-rich plasma (PRP), and other regenerative (aka “orthobiologic”) medicine treatments. Regenerative medicine utilizes one’s own cells or growth factors in order to amplify the body’s healing response or reduce inflammation and pain.

“As an Interventional Physiatrist, this is my particular interest,” Dr. Melfi said. “Regenerative injection treatments offer a viable alternative for individuals considering elective orthopedic surgery or joint replacement due to arthritis or injury. Patients experience very little down time and they typically avoid the long, painful rehabilitation periods that can follow surgery.”

Dr. Melfi added that re-

generative injections differ in where the tissue comes from and what type of tissue is being used:

✓ Autologous means that the orthobiologic comes from the same person in which it’s used.

Autologous injections include Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) and cellular(stem cell) injections. In PRP, your doctor may draw your blood from your arm vein, then make platelet-rich plasma (PRP) in a centrifuge, and re-inject that PRP on the same day into your damaged tendon or joint. Your platelets produce growth factors that can assist in healing.

Similarly, a “stem cell” is a type of cell within your body that is able to transform into another type of cell. Stem cells can be thought of as the conductor of your body’s innate healing potential; bringing together all the players (cells) needed for your body to stimulate healing of damaged tissue. The most common source for a stem cell is your own bone marrow, drawn up with a needle from bone in the back of your pelvis.

✓ Allogeneic means that the orthobiologic comes from another source, like birth tissues.

Dr. Melfi recommends

## What sets Regenerative Spine & Musculoskeletal Medicine apart?

✓Use of image guidance with x-ray or ultrasound to ensure precise needle placement.  
✓Dr. Melfi is Fellowship trained and board certified in spine and orthopedic medicine.

✓Integration of cutting edge research and holistic medicine.  
✓Personalized care in a small office setting.  
✓All patients are seen and treated by only Dr. Melfi.

caution in being aware of the use and marketing of allogeneic commercial products, which are usually birth products.

“In 2019, the FDA went to great lengths to warn consumers of the potential fraud that may arise from what it called stem cell therapy ‘hype,’” she said. “There have been commercial products available a provider could buy, that are sterilized and frozen, and marketed as “stem cell” injections. Scientific study has actually proven that these products contain no live or functional stem cells. These products should not be marketed as stem cell injections.”

Dr. Melfi pointed out that, on May 31, 2021, a three-year grace period granted by the FDA for these commercial products ended. As a result, amniotic product suppliers

are required to withdraw certain products from the market.

“It has not been uncommon for patients to come to my office for a second opinion consultation after having what they believed was a “stem cell injection” at another facility, with the use of a commercial amniotic product” she said. “There is no commercial product that contains stem cells. If it is a brand name product that comes from a bottle, it is not stem cells. In my office, I always draw up your own blood to make PRP or harvest your own bone marrow to do a stem cell injection.”

Dr. Melfi said she encourages the responsible use of these innovative treatments and will help navigate you through the confusion, controversy, and science surrounding these novel therapies.



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  - Joint and Arthritis Pain
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  - Sport/Work Injuries
  - Regenerative Orthopedic Injections
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Your CNY home for Regenerative injections:  
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PRP Facial, Hydrafacial

After injections, patients experience very little down time and typically avoid the long, painful rehabilitation that can follow surgery. All injections and visits are performed by Dr. Melfi. We offer personalized care in a small office setting. No surgery center co-pays!

**Renée S. Melfi, M.D.**  
FAAPMR, DABPM, ABIHM

Dr. Renée S. Melfi is quadruple certified:

- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPM&R)
- Pain Medicine (ABPM&R)
- Integrative Medicine (ABIHM)
- Medical Acupuncture (New York State)



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