

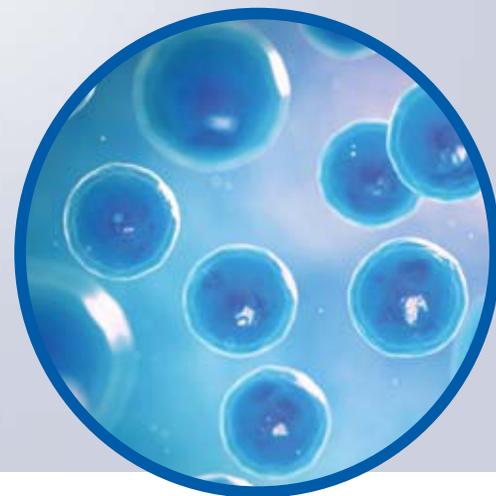


Q&A

Interview with Dr. G: What is Adult Stem Cell Therapy?

By LAUREL HOSTETLER

ADULT STEM CELLS (pictured right) have shown the ability to actually grow new tissues, cartilage and ligament, and are changing the medical landscape in revolutionary ways.



If you've been told your chronic joint pain is just a part of getting older or been advised that surgery and painkillers are the only treatment for a sports injury, a ground-breaking treatment may hold the key to your recovery. It's called adult stem cell therapy and it is changing the face of healthcare as we know it.

So what is adult stem therapy all about? We turned to expert **Dr. Gaurav K. Goswami, M.D.**, of the Precise Care Clinic to learn all about this revolutionary medical approach. >>>

Dr. Goswami, what are adult stem cells and what do they do?

Dr. G: Everyone has stem cells in their bodies; they are the body's repairmen and their main function is healing damaged tissues and replenishing damaged or dying cells. But what is really exciting about stem cells in the fat and bone marrow is that they can actually grow new tissues, cartilage and ligament, which is great news for people with arthritis and sports injuries. It's all a matter of getting the | *Continued next page*

ELBOW PAIN PHOTO PG. 16 BY MICHAL LUDWICZAK / SHUTTERSTOCK, STEM CELL PHOTO PG. 16 BY SEBASTIAN KAULITZKI / SHUTTERSTOCK

stem cells where they need to go. Adult stem cell therapy facilitates that process by harvesting the repair cells from one part of the patient's body and then introducing them into a damaged area so the healing process can happen.

So let me get this straight, adult stem cells can actually grow new tissue, cartilage and ligament?

Dr. G: Absolutely! That's what excites me about this field—it is all about using the body's own natural resources to heal itself. With the advent of stem cell therapy, joint replacement surgery may soon become a thing of the past. After all, synthetic drugs are not good for your body or kidneys and invasive surgery is fraught with risks and comes

with prolonged rehabilitation. Adult stem cell therapy is the wave of the future and will be revolutionizing the medical landscape for years to come.

Why is there controversy surrounding the use of stem cells?

Dr. G: The controversy you mention surrounds the use of embryonic stem cells, not adult stem cells. No embryonic or umbilical stem cells are used in adult stem cell treatments. The controversy over the use of embryonic stem cells comes from the fact that it involves the destruction of an embryo and also that it comes with a lot of risk: risk of rejection and a high risk of disease transmission. Adult stem cell therapy doesn't have those risks because it utilizes the patient's own cells.

Is adult stem cell therapy new?

Dr. G: Not at all. It has actually been around for a long time. In fact, bone marrow transplants are a form of adult stem cell therapy. Bone marrow is a rich source of stem cells and transplants can help patients grow their own healthy blood cells. While adult stem cell therapy has been around for decades, using it to treat bone and joint issues has been a more recent development. It has only been available in the states for the last two to three years but has been going on in Europe for about a decade, which is why professional athletes like Peyton Manning have previously gone overseas for these treatments with remarkable results.



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INTERVIEW WITH DR. G *continued from page 17*

Is there published science or clinical data that shows stem cells can help heal orthopedic injuries?

Dr. G: Yes. And at Precise Care we are very careful to educate our patients about the science behind these treatments. We make sure that our patients receive copies of published, peer-reviewed literature on stem cell therapy. Does it work in everybody? We're not there yet. But about 75% of patients have tremendous improvement and regrowth of cartilage. That's where stem cells hold a lot of promise.

What body areas do you typically treat?

Dr. G: Right now we're focused on large joints such as the shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees, and ankles. In the future we are looking to expand to include the spine. There have been some very promising developments in the treatment of degenerative disc disease with adult stem cells.

Who is a candidate for stem cell therapy?

Dr. G: Virtually anyone! Age is not a restriction. It is most commonly recommended for athletes with sports injuries, seniors with severe arthritis, people who may be candidates for joint replacement, and patients who are seeking an alternative to surgical repair of bone and joint problems. I would say that if you are a joint pain sufferer it would certainly be worth your while to look into this therapy.

What should a patient expect during the treatment?

Dr. G: Treatment involves a minimally invasive outpatient procedure done right in the doctor's office. During the first phase of the procedure, we harvest the patient's stem cells using either a simple liposuction technique or bone marrow extraction. Then we isolate the patient's stem cells from the sample of fat or marrow and count and check the cells for viability. The viable stem cells are then injected under imaging guidance directly into the patient's damaged joints. The entire procedure only takes three to four hours.

Are stem cells safe?

Dr. G: Yes. Because this therapy utilizes your body's own stem cells there is no risk of rejection or disease transmission. We do not add any chemicals to your cells nor do we ship them out of the office for processing. The only downside is the slight possibility of infection, as with any injection or procedure.

Is general anesthesia required?

Dr. G: No, the procedure only requires a local anesthetic.

What is the recovery like?

Dr. G: It is basically a walk-in, walk-out procedure. We recommend that you take it easy for a week—no strenuous activity. You may have to wear some type of compression garment depending on how much liposuction was done. And you'll need to take antibiotics for about a week as a precaution.

When can patients expect to see results?

Dr. G: Results vary from person to person and will depend on your own body and any medical conditions you may have. We also customize the treatment protocol depending on the patient and the severity of their condition. Some patients may begin to feel the pain-relieving benefits of the treatment shortly after treatment. Most patients will receive a treatment and continue to get better over the next six months to a year. Overall, the benefits of stem cell therapy are tremendous, offering joint pain sufferers the possibility of restoring their mobility and active lifestyle without invasive surgery.

Does health insurance cover the treatment?

Dr. G: This is cutting-edge science so, unfortunately, health insurance does not yet cover it.

What are some of the possible future uses of stem cells?

Dr. G: There is very exciting research being done in this field. In the future, applications of stem cell therapy may include treatments for COPD, diabetes, heart failure, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis, among others. The science is so promising, in fact, that the United States government has tripled its funding of adult stem cell research over the last decade. But for now, it is very gratifying as a physician to know that I can use it to help people with arthritis and sports injuries return to doing the things they love. ■