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Date: December 10, 2009

New Treatment Shows Promise for Healing Muscle and Tendon Injuries
Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Injection Therapy now being offered at ONS

GREENWICH, CT – Sports medicine physicians and physiatrists at Orthopaedic and Neurosurgery Specialists (ONS) on Valley Drive are treating some patients' soft tissue injuries with injections of **Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP)** with encouraging results. Although not yet FDA approved, PRP injection therapy is now being used by major sports medicine practices and research programs in the U.S. to enhance tissue recovery for various soft tissue problems such as tennis elbow, hamstring strains, MCL strains and patellar tendonitis.

PRP injection therapy was initially developed in the 1970s. Recent technological advances have made it possible to safely take PRP treatment from the hospital setting into the doctor's office. "The procedure is fairly straightforward and quick," explains ONS physiatrist Dr. Jeffery Heftler. "First, 10 milliliters of blood is drawn from the patient and then spun in a centrifuge for five minutes, separating out the platelets which are rich in the body's own growth factors. Then two to four milliliters of the separated blood is drawn out and injected back into the injury site. The theory is that these growth factors may help stimulate a healing response and can be useful in repairing soft tissue injuries that would otherwise take longer to heal." While it is a new treatment used for just a few years in orthopedics and considered experimental, it carries a very low risk and has good anecdotal success. At ONS the therapy has been used to treat young athletes for whom recovery time is very important and on men and women with lingering tendon and muscle injuries."

Lynn Surprenant of Greenwich is an athletic 51-year-old mother of two, who has enjoyed sailing, skiing, golf and other sports over the course of her life. Two years ago she developed painful tendonitis in her left elbow. It got better after resting it over the winter and then reoccurred after kayaking while on a winter vacation. Her elbow became so painful that even picking up a glass of water was excruciating.

The following June, ONS shoulder and elbow specialist Dr. Seth Miller gave her a cortisone injection into the joint which brought her initial relief. Unfortunately, the benefit wore off after about eight weeks. When she returned to Dr. Miller, he suggested that she try PRP injection therapy. Lynn underwent the treatment in

August. "Unlike a steroid injection, it can take up to six weeks to notice the full benefit of the injection," said Dr. Heftler. "However, PRP treatment seems to be effective in cases where steroids have failed."

Following the injection, Lynn was instructed not to use her arm for anything strenuous for two weeks but by the third, she could tell her elbow was feeling better. She began physical therapy to help get back the strength in her arm and by three months she was entirely pain free. "I am a big fan of PRP," said Ms. Surprenant. "I'm now pain free and back to doing all my normal activities."

By closely monitoring each patient who receives PRP, over time physicians are able to identify which conditions will benefit most from the treatment. Since the material comes from the patient's own body, there are no side effects from the injections. The treatment carries none of the risks of weakening surrounding tissue or increasing blood sugars that steroid injections have.

The ONS Foundation for Clinical Research and Education plans to initiate a study on the effectiveness of PRP for treatment of various soft tissue problems in 2010. For more information about Platelet-Rich Plasma injection therapy at ONS visit www.onsmd.com or <http://blog.onsmd.com>.

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Orthopaedic and Neurosurgery Specialists PC is the largest multi-specialty orthopaedic and neurosurgery practice in Fairfield and Westchester counties. ONS physicians provide expertise in the full spectrum of musculoskeletal conditions and injuries, sports medicine, minimally invasive orthopaedic, spine and brain surgery, joint replacement and trauma. The main office is located at 6 Greenwich Office Park on Valley Road, Greenwich, CT. For more information, please visit www.onsmd.com or call (203) 869-1145.

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