Percutaneous Needle Tenotomy (PNT)

Spectrum Orthopaedics
Spectrum Healthcare Partners

What is PNT?

Percutaneous Needle Tenotomy (PNT) is an ultrasound guided procedure used to re-start the healing process in a chronically injured tendon (tendinopathy). After anesthetizing the skin and tissues, ultrasound is used to guide a needle repeatedly through the affected area to disrupt the abnormal tissue and induce new healing.

Is it painful?

Pain during the procedure is minimal as the skin and tissues are anesthetized first. After the procedure, the pain is variable with ice and acetaminophen for pain control. A short course of a low dose narcotic is sometimes used to help with night time pain. Anti-inflammatories (naproxyn, ibuprofen) should be avoided for two weeks to allow the healing to progress naturally.

Will my insurance pay for this treament?

Unfortunately, at this time, many insurance companies consider this to be an investigational procedure, and do not pay for it. Although you might not receive reimbursement from your insurance company, we will submit a claim so that the data can be captured by the insurer and hopefully help to have this covered in the future.

What should I expect during and after the procedure?

The day of the procedure: you will be positioned comfortably while a painless ultrasound probe is used to see the injured tissue. Your skin is cleaned to minimize risk of infection, and the entire area is numbed with a local anesthetic. A needle is repeatedly guided through the diseased tendon. The skin is wiped clean and a band aid is applied.

After the procedure: you can begin to move the joint as soon as pain allows, and often, you return to physical or occupational therapy for guidance on progression of exercises to avoid doing too much too fast. Weight bearing tendons (knee, ankle) often have a brace to support them as well.

Follow-up typically occurs around 4 weeks after the procedure with about 80% of patients noting a significant improvement. For extensive cases, a second round of PNT is sometimes completed, but this is rare.

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