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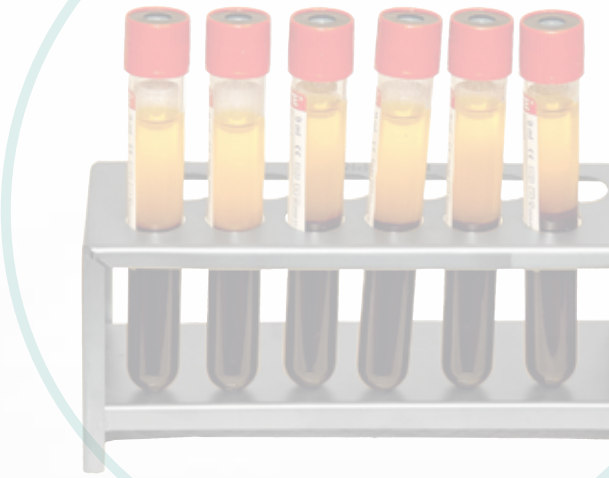
Understanding Platelet-Rich Fibrin



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Contents

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Dedication *vii*
Foreword by Robert E. Marx *viii*
Preface *ix*
Contributors *x*
Abbreviations *xiii*

1 Evolution of Platelet Concentrates *1*

SECTION I | BIOLOGY OF PRF

2 Biology of PRF: Fibrin Matrix, Growth Factor Release, and Cellular Activity *11*

3 Horizontal Versus Fixed-Angle Centrifugation of PRF: Optimization of C-PRF *51*

4 Understanding Relative Centrifugal Force (G-Force) *71*

5 Protocols for PRF *83*

6 Importance of Centrifugation Tubes for the Production of PRF *89*

7 Biologic Characterization of e-PRF Membranes *101*

8 Armamentarium in a PRF Kit *117*

9 Phlebotomy *123*

10 Fabricating Various PRF Modalities *135*

11 Overview of Clinical Indications Using PRF *147*

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SECTION II | PERIODONTOLOGY

12 Use of PRF for the Treatment of Gingival Recessions *151*

13 Use of PRF for the Treatment of Intrabony and Furcation Defects *167*

14 Use of PRF for Extraction Site Management *189*

SECTION III | IMPLANT DENTISTRY

15 Use of PRF as an Adjunct Therapy to Implant Dentistry *219*

16 Use of PRF in Guided Bone Regeneration *233*

17 Use of PRF for Sinus Grafting *253*

SECTION IV | ADDITIONAL DENTAL AND MEDICAL APPLICATIONS

18 Use of PRF in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery *275*

19 Use of PRF in Regenerative Endodontics *291*

20 Use of PRF in Facial Esthetics *317*

21 Medical Uses of PRF *329*

22 Future Research with PRF *347*

Index *363*

Dedication

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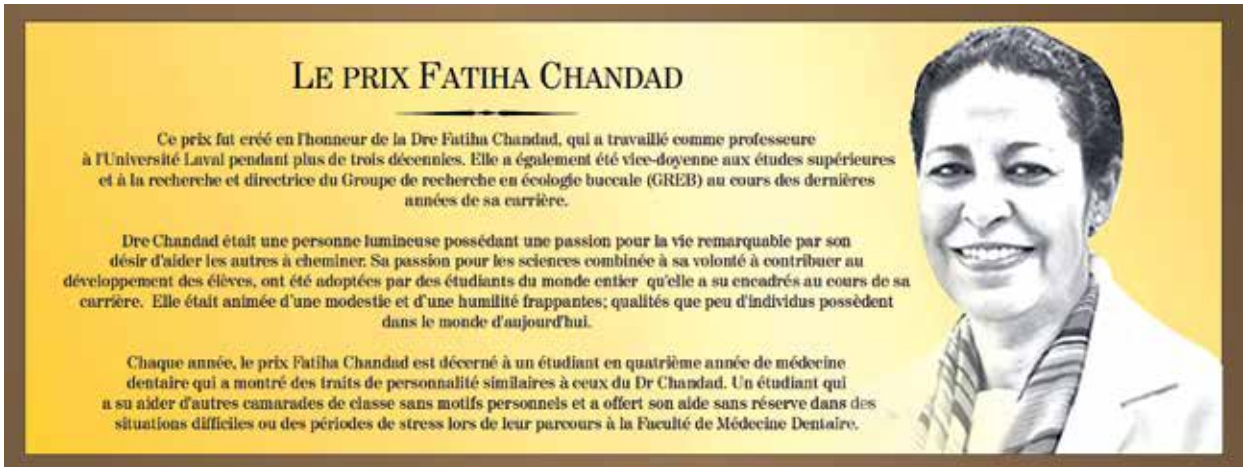

I would like to dedicate this textbook specifically to Dr Fatiha Chandad and the Dental Faculty at the University of Laval in Quebec, Canada, who devoted countless hours to training students like me in dentistry.

Dr Chandad, Dean of Dental Research, was someone who motivated me and more importantly made it possible for students to work within her laboratory on research projects during their 4 years of dental studies. It was here that I first started my research activities on PRP/PRF and became fascinated with research as a whole. Dr Chandad is one of the only people I have ever met never wanting to be recognized for her achievements, instead insisting that her students be recognized and at the forefront of their own success. It was during these times that I was awarded the prestigious Hatton Award in Canada and was later named the IADR Young Investigator of the Year in Implant Dentistry.

In appreciation of her contributions to my career, 100% of the royalties from this textbook will be donated to create a scholarship named after her for new dental graduates at the University of Laval. *Milles fois merci pour tout tes efforts!*

Foreword

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Many important medical/dental discoveries were stumbled upon by pure chance. An example of this is osseointegration, which launched the modern era of dental implants and orthopedic-embedded prostheses. It occurred when orthopedic researcher Per-Ingvar Brånemark found that his titanium research cages in sheep were so completely ingrown with bone that he couldn't remove them. Similarly, platelet-rich plasma (PRP)/platelet-rich fibrin (PRF) was discovered by the serendipity of observing accelerated and more complete healing in patients who developed hematomas. From that simple observation in the 1980s, the components of the blood clot responsible for the advanced healing have since been determined to be the complete and active growth factors in the alpha granules of viable platelets and several cell adhesion molecules and homing signals in the fibrin clot.

From the early pioneering work in the 1990s to the present, the benchmark of platelet numbers and the functional characteristics of the growth factors, cell adhesion molecules, and homing signals of PRP/PRF have progressed to a mature science and easy-to-use point-of-care devices.

Today, PRP/PRF devices are able to predictably concentrate platelets to known therapeutic levels by a variety of technologic means and to include or exclude leukocytes as per the needs of the wound. PRP/PRF has become a mainstay in bone regeneration in dental implantology and jaw reconstruction, for tendon and joint repair in orthopedics, for soft tissue healing in wound care centers, and in plastic surgery; it has thus benefited hundreds of thousands of patients worldwide.

As one of several individuals who were there at the beginning of the PRP/PRF discovery and who helped to move it along the way somewhat, I am delighted to see that the next generation of clinical researchers as published in *Understanding Platelet-Rich Fibrin* have brought it to the next level.

This text is written for the clinician to understand how and why PRF promotes healing of both bone and soft tissue as well as how to apply it to improve their own results. Written with a balanced blend of science and clinical applications by the most experienced and accomplished PRP/PRF scientists and clinicians of the day, and beautifully illustrated, *Understanding Platelet-Rich Fibrin* is a book for this decade that transcends all specialties of dentistry and many of medicine.

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Preface

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Over 20 years ago, platelet concentrates entered into the medical field as a means to deliver autologous growth factors responsible for favoring wound healing. During this time span, it has gained widespread acceptance in many fields of medicine due to its more natural delivery system.

Most notably, the past 5 years have seen a tremendous increase in publications on PRF, with over 200 scientific peer-reviewed papers being published each and every year. During this span, a marked increase in our understanding of PRF therapy has been made with respect to selection of appropriate centrifugation devices, impact of tube chemistry on clotting, the optimization of protocols to better concentrate PRF, and even the ability to extend the working properties of PRF from 2–3 weeks toward 4–6 months using a simple heating process. Collectively, we continue to gather new knowledge, and as a result, PRF therapy has become one of the fastest-growing therapeutic options in dentistry. Thousands of users have now benefited from this technology, and this number is only expected to continue to increase.

This book is very different from others in its concept design. More than a dozen expert researchers and clinicians alike were gathered as editors across their different fields of expertise. As section editors, these true experts of their respective disciplines were able to produce a much higher overall quality of this textbook. I am grateful for their encouraging team spirit, their effort in bringing this book to an entirely new level, and their level of professionalism and mindset that ultimately led to this comprehensive textbook. I am also grateful to the numerous clinicians who have provided videos to better educate/demonstrate surgical techniques and concepts with PRF, which will greatly enhance the learning experience of the reader.

The book is divided into four primary sections, including *(1)* biology of PRF, *(2)* periodontology, *(3)* implant dentistry, and *(4)* additional dental and medical applications. The book aims to take the reader from a basic biologic understanding of PRF through explanations of the various protocols utilized followed by application of these concepts in numerous clinical scenarios.

I therefore am thrilled to introduce our textbook titled *Understanding Platelet-Rich Fibrin*. I hope you enjoy learning the many aspects centered around the use of PRF in regenerative dentistry.

Acknowledgments

To my parents, family, and friends who have all sacrificed far too often in my pursuit of a career in academic dentistry.

To my classmates, colleagues, and mentors who constantly raised the bar and strived for better.

To Quintessence Publishing for your thorough input in the editing, illustrations, and design of this textbook.

To my family at Lakewood Ranch Dental in Florida who have made clinical practice as enjoyable an experience as can be on a *daily* basis.

To all leaders and researchers alike who have contributed enormously to the field of PRP/PRF and laid the foundation for this textbook to be written.

To the faculty in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Cell Biology at the University of Western Ontario (London, Canada; BMSc, MSc), the Dental School at the University of Laval (Quebec; DDS), the Department of Music at Berklee College (Boston; MMus), the Department of Periodontology at the University of Bern (PhD, Dr med dent), the Department of Oral Implantology at Wuhan University (China; postdoctoral research fellow), the Plastic Surgery Department at Queen Mary University (London; clinical masters in facial esthetics), and the Department of Periodontology at the University of Illinois at Chicago (clinical masters in periodontology). Your education and mentorship has provided endless opportunities.

And lastly, to the team at Advanced PRF Education (www.prfedu.com) for making excellence in teaching a top priority.

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Abbreviations

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The abbreviations listed here are used throughout the book and are NOT always spelled out in the chapters for ease of reading.

ALP	alkaline phosphatase
AM	amniotic membrane
A-PRF	advanced PRF
BoP	bleeding on probing
BMP	bone morphogenetic protein
CAF	coronally advanced flap
CAL	clinical attachment level
CBC	complete blood count
CEJ	cementoenamel junction
C-PRF	concentrated-PRF
CTG	connective tissue graft
DBBM	deproteinized bovine bone mineral
DFDBA	demineralized freeze-dried bone allograft
ECM	extracellular matrix
EDTA	ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EGF	epidermal growth factor
EMD	enamel matrix derivative
e-PRF	extended-PRF
ePTFE	expanded polytetrafluoroethylene
FDA	US Food and Drug Administration
FDBA	freeze-dried bone allograft
GBR	guided bone regeneration
GF	growth factor
H&E	hematoxylin-eosin stain
hPDLC	human periodontal ligament cell
H-PRF	PRF obtained through horizontal centrifugation
IGF	insulinlike growth factor
IL	interleukin
i-PRF	injectable-PRF
ISQ	implant stability quotient
KTW	keratinized tissue width
L-PRF	leukocyte PRF
LPS	lipopolysaccharide
LSCC	low-speed centrifugation concept
mRNA	messenger RNA
MRONJ	medication-related osteonecrosis of the jaw
MSC	mesenchymal stem cell
OFD	open flap debridement
ONJ	osteonecrosis of the jaw
PD	probing depth
PDGF	platelet-derived growth factor
PPE	personal protective equipment
PPP	platelet-poor plasma
PRF	platelet-rich fibrin
PRGF	plasma rich in growth factors
PRP	platelet-rich plasma
PTFE	polytetrafluoroethylene
RBC	red blood cell
RBH	residual bone height
RCF	relative centrifugal force
RCT	randomized controlled trial
rpm	revolutions per minute
RT-PCR	real-time polymerase chain reaction
SD	standard deviation
SE	standard error
SEM	scanning electron microscopy
TGF-β	transforming growth factor β
TMJ	temporomandibular joint
TNF-α	tumor necrosis factor α
T-PRF	titanium-prepared PRF
VEGF	vascular endothelial growth factor
WBC	white blood cell

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Evolution of Platelet Concentrates

Contributors

Richard J. Miron

Chapter Highlights

- *Evolution of PRF and the reasons for its discovery*
- *Discussion of PRP vs PRGF vs PRF vs L-PRF, A-PRF, etc*
- *Biologic background of key steps involved during wound healing*



Video 1-1

Platelet concentrates were derived more than 20 years ago following the discovery that platelets themselves act as key regulators during the wound healing process. Initial attempts were first made to concentrate these cells using anticoagulants and a centrifugation device; the resulting biomaterial was called *platelet-rich plasma* (PRP). Shortly thereafter, protocols were developed with the aim of avoiding the use of anticoagulants altogether, because clotting is a pivotal step during the wound healing cascade; the resulting biomaterial was called *platelet-rich fibrin* (PRF). Today, platelet concentrates have become incredibly relevant worldwide, with their use spanning across nearly every field of regenerative medicine. Furthermore, one of the main growth factors (GFs) found in platelets—platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF)—has been commercialized as a ready-made laboratory recombinant protein under the trade name GEM 21S (Lynch Biologics). Thus, as medicine has continued to evolve and progress, an obvious and clear trend favoring GF use has been established. Furthermore, by modifying centrifugation devices and spin protocols of PRP/PRF, a greater ability to concentrate not only platelets but also leukocytes became possible, further favoring tissue regeneration. This chapter takes a deep look at the years of research leading to the significant advancement that has been made in this field. The evolution from PRP to PRF, including pioneering concepts such as the low-speed centrifugation concept and horizontal centrifugation, are discussed in terms of their ability to favor higher cell content, GF concentration, and ultimately better wound healing.

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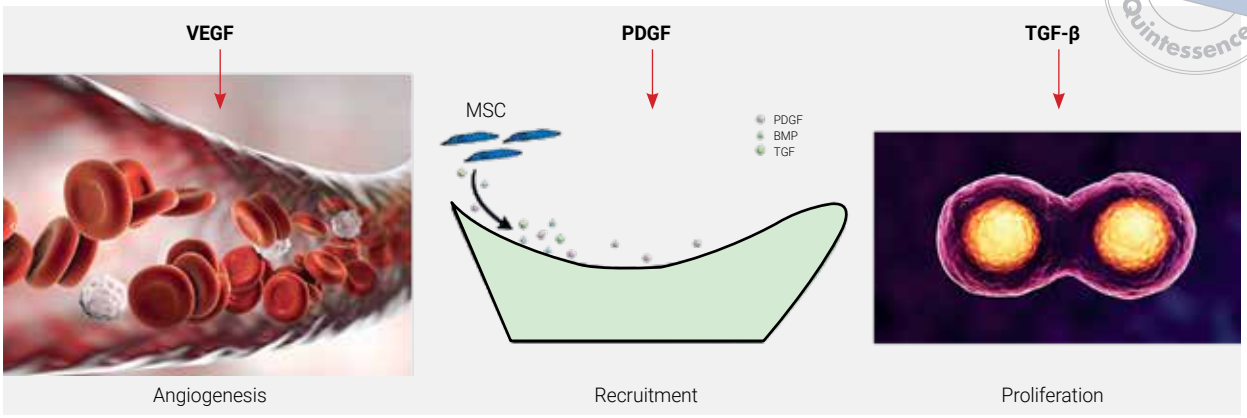

Fig 1-1 The three main GFs that are released from PRF include VEGF, a known inducer of angiogenesis; PDGF, a known inducer of cell recruitment; and TGF-β1, a known stimulator of cell proliferation. MSC, mesenchymal stem cell.

Platelet concentrates have been utilized in medicine for over two decades because of their ability to rapidly secrete autologous GFs and ultimately speed wound healing. They have gained tremendous momentum as a regenerative agent derived from autologous sources capable of stimulating tissue regeneration in a number of medical fields.[1,2] Many years ago, it was proposed that by concentrating platelets using a centrifugation device, GFs derived from blood could be collected from a platelet-rich plasma layer and later utilized in surgical sites to promote local wound healing.[1,2] Today, it has been well established that platelet concentrates act as a potent mitogen capable of the following (Fig 1-1):

- Speeding the revascularization of tissues (angiogenesis)
- Recruiting various cells including stem cells
- Inducing the prompt multiplication of various cell types found in the human body (proliferation)

Wound healing is a complex biologic process whereby many cell types interact with one another as well as their local extracellular matrix (ECM) in order to repair and regenerate damaged tissues.[3–6] While many regenerative agents currently exist on the market to help speed tissue regeneration, it is important to note that the majority are derived from other human sources (allografts) and animal byproducts. These naturally create a foreign body reaction when implanted into host tissues. While the majority of such biomaterials do certainly favor improved healing, it has generally been recognized and accepted that the gold standard for the majority of tissue-regenerative procedures in basically every field of medicine has been the use of autogenous tissues.

Specifically in dentistry, platelet concentrates were introduced over 20 years ago by Robert E. Marx and colleagues with the aim of concentrating blood proteins as a natural source of GFs that would stimulate vascularization (angiogenesis) and tissue ingrowth based on the fact that blood supply is pivotal for tissue regeneration of all tissues.[7] Wound healing has been described as a four-step process that includes *(1)* hemostasis, *(2)* inflammation, *(3)* proliferation, and *(4)* maturation[8–10] (Fig 1-2). Each phase overlaps one another and encompasses various microenvironments, including different cell types that assist in wound healing. Noteworthy are the implications of immune cells during biomaterial integration. In a study titled "OsteoMacs: Key players around bone biomaterials," osteal macrophages were discussed as being key and pivotal cells during the wound healing process.[11] Thus, as tissue biology has continued to evolve, platelet concentrates have also seen significant advancement with respect to their ability to favor healing by incorporating immune cells (leukocytes). Various systematic reviews from multiple fields of medicine have now demonstrated their ability to support tissue regeneration across many tissue types and cell types. This chapter reviews the evolution of platelet concentrates.

PRP (1990s)

The use of platelet concentrates has slowly and gradually gained popularity over time, with a dramatic increase

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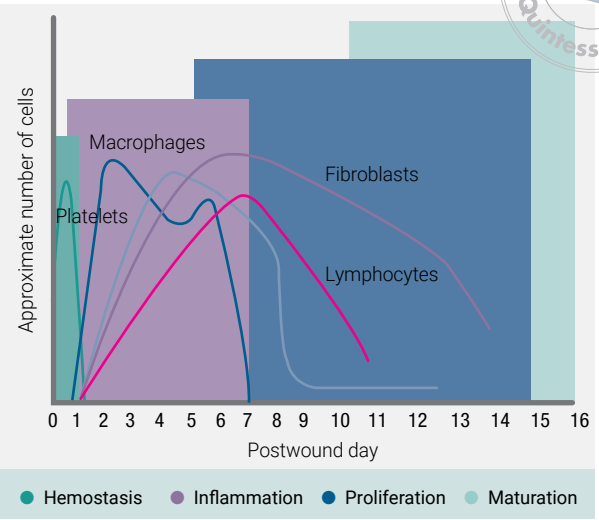

Fig 1-2 Four phases of wound healing: *(1)* hemostasis, *(2)* inflammation, *(3)* proliferation, and *(4)* maturation. Noteworthy are the overlaps between each of the phases and the population of cells found in each category. Whereas lymphocytes typically arise at 7 days, the ability of PRF to introduce a high number at day 0 acts to speed the regenerative phase during this process.

being observed in the past 5 to 10 years. This parallels precisely the massive increase in research articles being published on the topic. Despite this, it is important to review and highlight the pioneering work conducted by Marx and colleagues over 20 years ago, without which none of this textbook would exist.[12–14]

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP), as its name implies, was designed to accumulate platelets in supraphysiologic doses within the plasma layer following centrifugation. The main aim of PRP was to isolate and further concentrate the highest quantity of platelets and their associated GFs for regenerative purposes, thereafter reimplanting this specialized supraconcentrate at sites of local injury. This concept has been the basis of thousands of research articles, with their protocols being utilized to favor wound healing in millions of patients.

Initial protocols typically ranged in duration from 30 minutes to 1 hour based on the centrifugation/collection systems and protocols utilized. The original concept was pioneered by Harvest Technology, where it was shown that over 95% platelet concentration could be accumulated, having the potential to help favor the regenerative phase of many cell types including soft tissues, epithelial cells, periodontal ligament cells, and bone cells.[15,16] Because these initial protocols were lengthy, anticoagulants were added to the blood collection tubes. These typically were various forms of concentrated bovine thrombin or sodium citrate.

Despite its growing success and continued use after its discovery, several reported limitations existed with these initial formulations of PRP. The 30-minute or longer technique was generally considered lengthy for routine dental or medical practice, and more importantly, the use of anticoagulants was shown to limit wound healing from reaching its maximum potential. Simply put, when injury is created following an open wound, a blood clot is one of the first steps that occurs in order for healing to take place. Shortly thereafter, cells and GFs get trapped within this newly formed ECM, and the wound healing process/cascade begins. By limiting the body's ability to form a stable clot, wound healing is limited. Several studies have now demonstrated the superior outcomes of platelet-rich fibrin (PRF) when compared to PRP simply by removing anticoagulants from their formulations.[17–21] Even the pioneering research team behind the plasma rich in growth factors (PRGF) concept (Anitua et al) have since demonstrated more physiologic healing ability with anticoagulant removal.[17]

Another drawback of PRP was the fact that it remained liquid by nature (due to the use of anticoagulants), so when it was combined with biomaterials, a much faster delivery of GFs was observed (Fig 1-3). While an initial burst of GFs is typical of PRP therapy, a slower release of GFs over an extended period of time has been shown to better stimulate cell growth and tissue regeneration.[22,23]

Much advancement related to PRP therapy has been made over the past 20 years, and two excellent textbooks have been written by its pioneers—*Dental and Craniofacial Applications of Platelet-Rich Plasma* by Robert E. Marx and Arun K. Garg (Quintessence, 2005), and *Autologous Blood Concentrates* by Arun K. Garg (2018). Its breakthrough features include the novel ability to concentrate platelets

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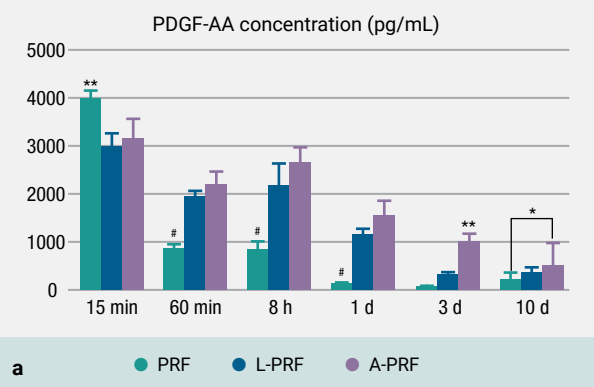

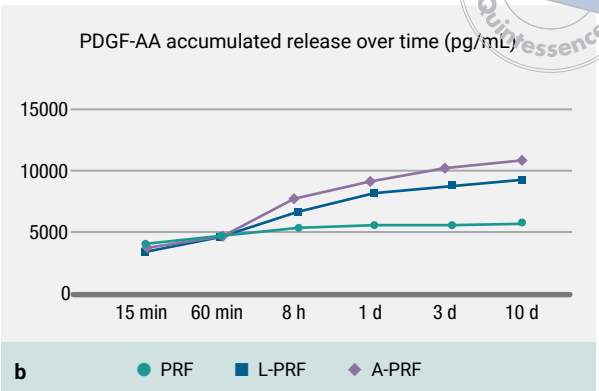

Fig 1-3 *(a and b)* GF release from PRP and PRF at each time point of PDGF-AA over a 10-day period. Notice that while PRP has significantly higher GF release at early time points, over a 10-day period, significantly higher levels are most commonly found with A-PRF due to the slow and gradual release of GFs utilizing slower centrifugation speeds. (Adapted from Kobayashi et al.[19])

to supraphysiologic doses and further stimulate tissue regeneration across virtually all tissue types. For these reasons, PRP has not surprisingly been utilized in practically every field of medicine.

Snapshot of PRP

- Marx was the first to show that a concentration of platelets could favor tissue regeneration in the oral cavity.
- A subsequent device was brought to market thanks to these breakthrough research projects conducted at the University of Miami (Harvest system).
- PRP is credited for having exponentially grown the entire field of platelet concentrates, including its subcategories such as PRF.

L-PRF (2000–2010)

Because the anticoagulants utilized in PRP prevented clotting, pioneering work performed by Dr Joseph Choukroun and Dr David Dohan Ehrenfest led to the development of PRF.[24] The aim was to develop a second-generation platelet concentrate focused on anticoagulant removal. Because anticoagulants were removed, a much quicker working time was needed, and centrifugation had to begin shortly after blood draw (otherwise, the blood would naturally clot). Furthermore, high g-force centrifugation protocols were initially utilized in an attempt to separate blood layers prior to clotting. The final spin cycle (initial studies ranged from 2500–3000 rpm for 10–12 minutes = ~700g) resulted in a plasma layer composed of a fibrin clot with entrapment of platelets and leukocytes. The main advantage of this fibrin matrix was its ability to release GFs over an extended period of time while the fibrin clot was being degraded.[25] Over the years, PRF has been termed *L-PRF* (for *leukocyte platelet-rich fibrin*) due to the discoveries that several leukocytes remained incorporated in PRF and that white blood cells play a central and key role in the tissue healing process. The most commonly utilized protocol today is a spin cycle at 3000 rpm for 10 minutes or 2700 rpm for 12 minutes (RCF-max = ~700g, RCF-clot = ~400g).

Several other advantages also existed during clinical use because it avoided the need for dual-spin protocols requiring pipetting or various specialized tube compartments, which made the overall procedure much more user-friendly, cheaper, and faster when compared to PRP. Original protocols were purposefully designed to spin at high centrifugation speeds with the main aim of phase separation to occur as quickly as possible in order to separate the red corpuscle base layer from the upper plasma layer prior to clotting. Following centrifugation, a platelet-rich fibrin mesh was formed, giving it the working name *PRF*[26–28] (Fig 1-4). PRF has since been highly researched, with over 1,000 publications dedicated to this topic alone.

Additionally, research teams from around the world have demonstrated the impact of leukocytes on tissue healing.[29–34] While it was once thought that the additional benefit of leukocyte incorporation into PRF was its main properties in improved host defense to foreign pathogens,[29–34] it has since been shown in well-conducted basic research studies

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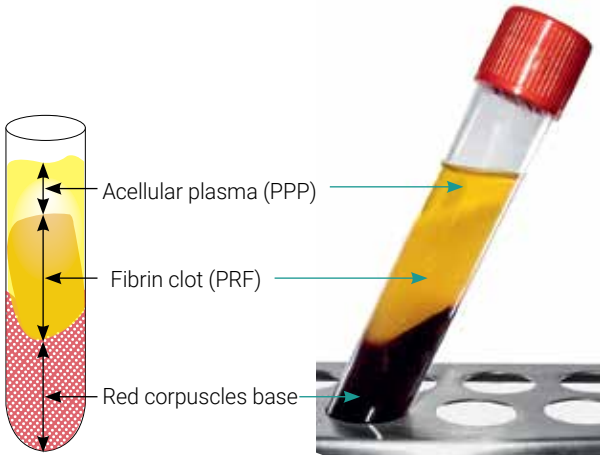

Fig 1-4 Layers produced after centrifugation of whole blood. A PRF clot forms in the upper portion of tubes after centrifugation.

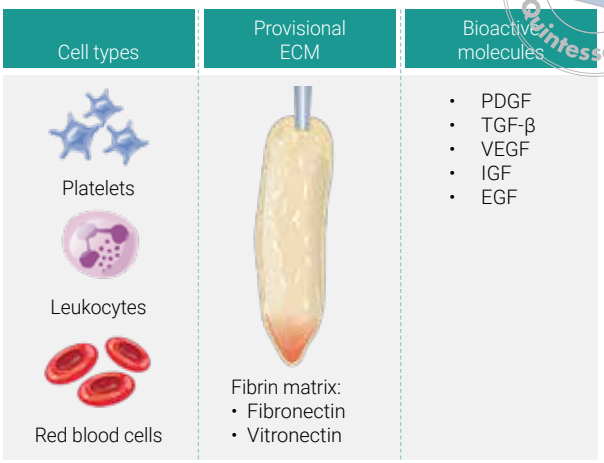

Fig 1-5 Three main components of PRF all derived naturally from the human body. These include *(1)* cell types (platelets, leukocytes, and red blood cells); *(2)* a provisional ECM 3D scaffold fabricated from autologous fibrin (including fibronectin and vitronectin); and *(3)* a wide array of over 100 bioactive molecules, including most notably PDGF, TGF-β, VEGF, IGF, and EGF.

that leukocytes are pivotal to tissue regeneration and favor faster wound healing also.[11,35–37] In dentistry, where the oral cavity is filled with bacteria and microbes, the inclusion of leukocytes was initially thought to play a pivotal role in wound healing by participating in the phagocytosis of debris, microbes, and necrotic tissues, as well as directing the future regeneration of these tissues through the release of several cytokines and GFs and orchestrating cell-to-cell communication between many cell types.

Tissue engineering with PRF

Tissue engineering has been an emerging discipline over the past decade, with major breakthroughs routinely being made every year. At its simplest foundation, tissue engineering requires three parameters: *(1)* a scaffold responsible to support tissue ingrowth, *(2)* cells that may act to promote tissue regeneration, and *(3)* GFs that stimulate the overall wound healing events. Unlike the majority of biomaterials currently available on the market, PRF actually contains each of these three properties (Fig 1-5). For comparative purposes, routine bone allografts contain a scaffold (mineralized cortical/cancellous bone) and GFs embedded in its bone matrix (such as bone morphogenetic protein 2 [BMP-2]) but have no cells. Recombinant human GFs typically have a GF (for instance, rhBMP-2) and a carrier (collagen sponge) but also lack cells. Certain stem technologies typically contain cells and also a delivery system (for instance a nanocarrier delivery system) but lack GFs. The ability to actually contain each of the three tissue engineering properties within a single biomaterial is quite rare and, more importantly, usually extremely expensive (think recombinant GFs and/or stem cell technology).

PRF, on the other hand, is a particularly simple and inexpensive way to utilize the three principles of tissue engineering by utilizing a 3D scaffold (fibrin) that incorporates both regenerative host cells (platelets and leukocytes) and various GFs. These include PDGF, TGF-β, and VEGF, each of which is crucial during the regeneration process. Furthermore, the concentrated leukocytes (as opposed to simply platelets) in PRF have been well implicated as key regulators of tissue healing and formation.[26–28,31,38]

Snapshot of PRF

- PRF is considered a second-generation platelet concentrate with a longer GF release profile.
- Centrifugation protocols are shorter and do not need any chemical additives such as anticoagulants.
- PRF falls more in line with tissue engineering principles in that it is not only an accumulation of cells and GFs but also a scaffold (fibrin matrix).
- PRF incorporates leukocytes, which are key cells in pathogen defense and biomaterial integration.

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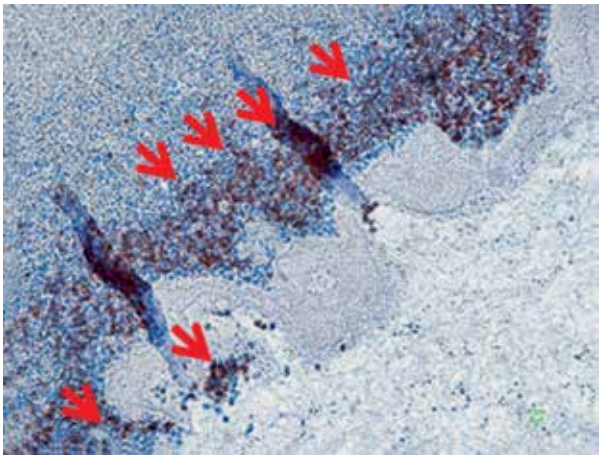

Fig 1-6 Histologic observation of leukocytes following centrifugation. Resulting white blood cells have been shown to be contained basically in the layers between the plasma PRF layer and the red blood cell clot. This finding demonstrated quite clearly that the g-force was excessive, necessitating the development of newer protocols aimed to improve the retention of leukocytes within the PRF matrix. (Reprinted with permission from Ghanaati et al.[39])



Fig 1-7 Newer centrifugation protocols allow production of a liquid formulation of PRF found in the top 1- to 2-mL layer of centrifugation tubes following a 3- to 5-minute protocol. This liquid can be collected in a syringe and reinjected into defect sites or mixed with biomaterials to improve their bioactive properties. (Reprinted with permission from Davies and Miron.[40])

A-PRF and i-PRF (2014–2018)

While much of the research performed in the late 2000s and early 2010s was dedicated to the clinical uses and indications of L-PRF discussed later in this textbook, major discoveries were made several years later from basic research laboratories. Following extensive clinical use and research with the original L-PRF protocol, it was discovered in 2014 by Dr Shahram Ghanaati that centrifugation carried out at relatively high centrifugation speeds (~700g) led to the great majority of leukocytes being located either at the buffy coat zone (between the red blood cell layer and the upper plasma layer) or more commonly at the bottom of centrifugation tubes (Fig 1-6).[39] It was expressed that the longer the centrifugation time is carried out, the more likely it is that cells get pushed further down the centrifugation tube. Similarly, the faster the spin centrifugation speed (higher g-force), the greater the proportion of cells found in the lower levels of centrifugation tubes.

Pioneering research within his laboratory led to the development of an advanced PRF (A-PRF) whereby lower centrifugation speeds (~200g) led to a higher accumulation of platelets and leukocytes more evenly distributed throughout the upper PRF layers. These newer protocols more favorably led to a higher release and concentration of GFs over a 10-day period when compared to PRP or L-PRF.[19] In 2015 to 2017, our research team further demonstrated that optimization of PRF could be achieved by reducing not only centrifugation speed but also the time involved. The A-PRF protocol was therefore modified from 14 minutes at 200g as originally described in 2014 down to an 8-minute protocol.[19]

Following an array of basic research studies on this topic, it was observed that by further reducing the g-force and also the time, it was possible to obtain a plasma layer that had not yet converted into fibrin (ie, scientifically liquid fibrinogen but often referred to as *liquid-PRF* for simplicity). In a study titled "Injectable platelet rich fibrin (i-PRF): Opportunities in regenerative dentistry?",[20] it was demonstrated that at lower centrifugation speeds and times (~60g for 3 minutes), a liquid-PRF (termed *injectable-PRF* or *i-PRF*) could be obtained. While these protocols typically produced minimal volumes (~1.0–1.5 mL), it was shown that both platelets and leukocytes were even more highly concentrated when compared to L-PRF or A-PRF (Fig 1-7).[40] This liquid-PRF layer could be utilized clinically for approximately 15 to 20 minutes, during which time fibrinogen and thrombin had not yet converted to a fibrin matrix (ie, remained liquid). This has since been utilized for injection into various joints/spaces similar to PRP, however with the reported advantages of a longer GF release time. Furthermore, the concept of "sticky" bone was also developed. Importantly, a different type of tube (plastic) was needed to minimize clotting, as will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

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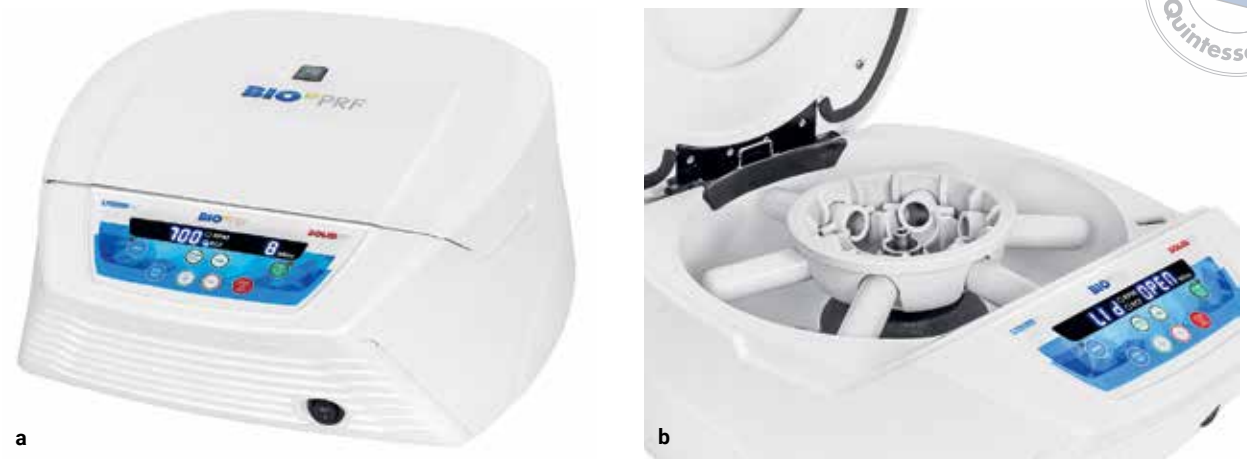

Fig 1-8 *(a)* Clinical photograph of a Bio-PRF centrifuge. *(b)* Photograph demonstrating the horizontal centrifugation concept. The tubes are inserted vertically (up and down), but once the device begins to rotate, the tubes swing out completely horizontally. This favors better blood cell layer separation with higher platelet and GF concentrations.

Snapshot of A-PRF and i-PRF

- Original L-PRF protocols were shown to be too fast, leading to all the cells being accumulated only at the buffy coat zone, with the majority of leukocytes found within the red blood cell layer.
- The low-speed centrifugation concept was shown in 2014 to favor a higher concentration of cells within PRF membranes.
- By further lowering speed and time, a liquid-PRF formulation became available, commonly known as *injectable-PRF* (or i-PRF).



Video 1-2

H-PRF and C-PRF (2019–Present)

Very recently, our research group discovered through a series of basic laboratory experiments that horizontal centrifugation led to significantly greater concentrations of platelets and leukocytes when compared to currently available fixed-angle centrifugation devices most commonly utilized to produce L-PRF and A-PRF. Simply, horizontal centrifuges are routinely utilized in high-end research laboratories as well as in medical hospitals because of their greater ability to separate layers based on density (Fig 1-8; see also chapters 2 and 3). Unlike fixed-angle centrifugation systems whereby the tubes are actually inserted at a 45-degree angle, in horizontal centrifugation systems (often referred to as *swing-out bucket centrifugation*), the tubes have the ability to swing out to 90 degrees once they are in rotation (Video 1-2). Amazingly, the original PRP systems developed by Harvest and Marx utilized and still use this technology.

In 2019, an article on the topic demonstrated clearly that horizontal centrifugation could lead to up to a four-times greater cell content when compared to fixed-angle centrifugation.[41] This represented a marked ability to greatly concentrate cells found within PRF, which were primarily being accumulated on the back distal surfaces of PRF tubes (Fig 1-9). The major disadvantage of fixed-angle centrifugation is that during the spin cycle, cells are typically driven along the back wall of the centrifugation tubes at high g-forces (Fig 1-10). This also exposes cells to higher compressive forces against the back wall, and

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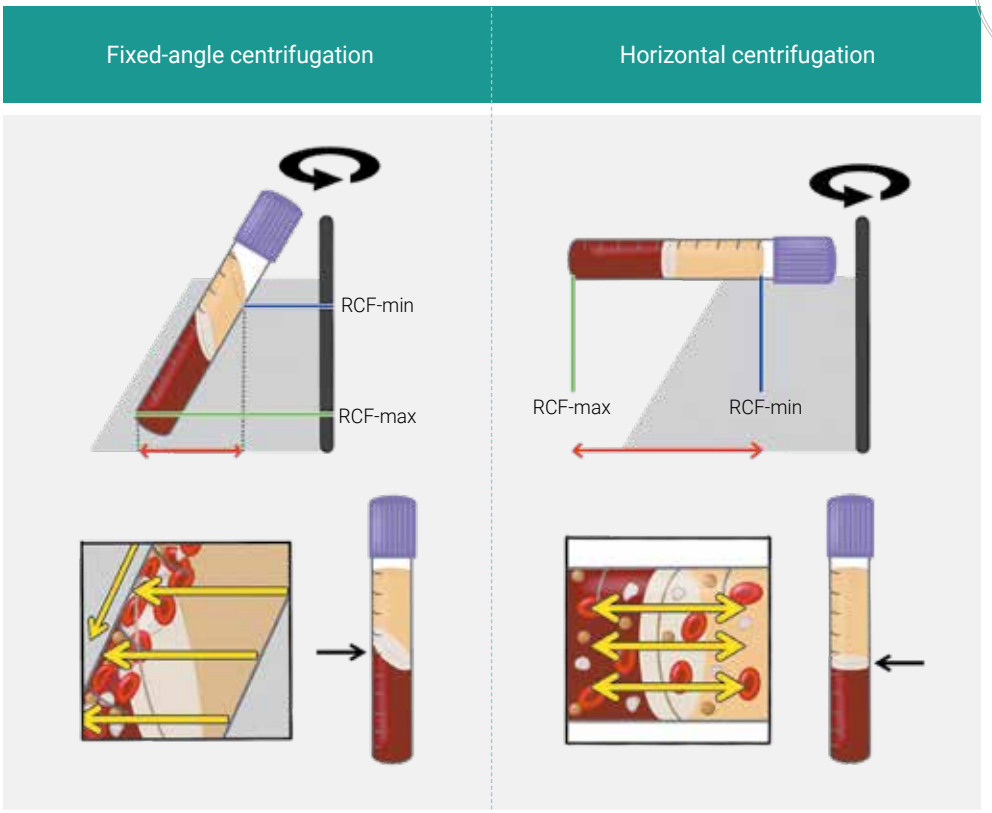

Fig 1-9 Illustrations comparing fixed-angle and horizontal centrifuges. With horizontal centrifugation, a greater separation of blood layers based on density is achieved owing to the greater difference in RCF-min and RCF-max. Following centrifugation on fixed-angle centrifuges, blood layers do not separate evenly, and as a result, an angled blood separation is observed. In contrast, horizontal centrifugation produces even separation. Owing to the large RCF values (~200g–700g), the cells are pushed toward the outside and downward. On a fixed-angle centrifuge, cells are pushed toward the back of centrifugation tubes and then downward/upward based on cell density. These g-forces produce additional shear stress on cells as they separate based on density along the back walls of centrifugation tubes. In contrast, horizontal centrifugation allows for the free movement of cells to separate into their appropriate layers based on density, allowing for better cell separation as well as less trauma/shear stress on cells. (Modified from Miron et al.[41])

cells must then separate by traveling either up or down the inclined centrifugation slope based on their respective cell density differences. Because red blood cells are larger and heavier than platelets and leukocytes, they travel downward, whereas lighter platelets travel toward the top of the tube where PRF is collected. This makes it relatively difficult for the small cell types such as platelets and leukocytes to reach the upper layer, especially granted that red blood cells outnumber in particular white blood cells typically by 1,000-fold (see chapter 2). Therefore, it is not possible to reach optimal accumulation of platelets or leukocytes using a fixed-angle centrifuge.

Furthermore, by utilizing a novel method to quantify cell types found in PRF, it was possible to substantially improve standard i-PRF protocols that favored only a 1.5- to 3-fold increase in platelets and leukocytes. Noteworthy is that several research groups began to show that the final concentration of platelets was only marginally improved in i-PRF when compared to standard baseline values of whole blood.[41,42] In addition, significant modifications to PRF centrifugation protocols have further been developed, demonstrating the ability to improve standard i-PRF protocols toward liquid formulations that are significantly more concentrated (C-PRF) with over 10- to 15-times greater concentrations of platelets and leukocytes when compared to i-PRF (see chapters 2 and 3). Today, C-PRF has been established as the most highly concentrated PRF protocol described in the literature.

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Fig 1-10 Visual representation of layer separation following either L-PRF or H-PRF protocols. L-PRF clots are prepared with a sloped shape, and multiple red dots are often observed on the distal surface of PRF tubes, while H-PRF results in horizontal layer separation between the upper plasma and lower red corpuscle layer.

Snapshot of H-PRF and C-PRF

- Horizontal centrifugation leads to up to a four-times greater accumulation of platelets and leukocytes when compared to fixed-angle centrifugation systems commonly utilized to produce L-PRF and A-PRF.
- Cells accumulate evenly when PRF is produced via horizontal centrifugation as opposed to along the back distal surface of PRF tubes on fixed-angle centrifuges.
- Standard i-PRF can be further improved with horizontal centrifugation.

Conclusion

Platelet concentrates have seen a wide and steady increase in popularity since they were launched more than two decades ago. While initial concepts launched in the 1990s led to the working name *platelet-rich plasma*, subsequent years and discoveries have focused more specifically on their anticoagulant removal (ie, PRF). Several recent improvements in centrifugation protocols, including the low-speed centrifugation concept and horizontal centrifugation, have led to increased concentrations of GFs and better healing potential. Both solid-PRF as well as liquid-based formulations now exist, with an array of clinical possibilities created based on the ability to accumulate supraphysiologic doses of platelets and blood-derived GFs. Future strategies to further improve PRF formulations and protocols are continuously being investigated to additionally improve clinical practice utilizing this technology.

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Index

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Page references followed by "f" denote figures; those followed by "t" denote tables.

A

Abdominal ulcer, 331f
Achilles tendon repair, 336
Acupuncture, 318
Advanced platelet-rich fibrin. *See* A-PRF.
Age, PRF membrane size affected by, 47–48, 48f, 76
Alb-PRF, 102. *See* e-PRF.
Albumin, 102, 113
Alkaline phosphatase, 42, 43f, 293
Allografts
  foreign body reaction to, 2
  furcation defects treated with, 169
  growth factors in, 5
  guided bone regeneration use of, 239
  intrabony defects treated with, 169
  periodontal regeneration uses of, 169
  PRF and, for ridge preservation, 211f
  PRF fragments and, 140
  3D bone allograft block, 352–355, 353f–354f
Alopecia, 325
Alveolar bone, 168f
Alveolar cleft reconstruction, 284, 284f–285f
Alveolar osteitis, 184
Alveolar ridge
  horizontal augmentation of, 241–242, 242f–244f, 250f, 285f
  narrow, guided bone regeneration for, 245f–246f
  preservation of, in extraction site management
    bone grafts for, 210, 211f–213f
    description of, 189, 192, 194–195
    PRF for, 196, 210f–213f
  split technique of, with implant placement, 229f, 246f–247f
  vertical augmentation of, 242, 243f–244f, 359f
Amelogenins, 169
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, 276
Anal fistula repair, 335
Andrology, 335
Angiogenesis, 148, 234, 271
Antecubital fossa, 124, 124f, 128
Antecubital veins
  H-pattern, 125f, 127
  M-pattern, 126f, 127
Anterior cruciate ligament regeneration, 337f
Anterior mandible, guided bone regeneration in, 245f–246f
Antibacterial properties, 45–46, 46f
Antibiotics, 355
Anticoagulants
  PRF added to, 12
  wound healing affected by, 3
Apexification
  PRF for, 300–302, 301f, 301t–302t, 303f
  revascularization versus, 303
Apical mattress sutures, 160, 162f
Apical surgery, 308t–309t, 308–309, 310f
A-PRF
  centrifugation protocol for
    cell quantification after, 28–29, 29f, 32
    description of, 6, 6f
    findings, 32f
    low-speed, 29, 32
    platelet distribution after, 32
  centrifugation tubes for
    recent changes in, 93
    silica microparticle contamination in, 86–87, 87f
  history of, 6
  platelet-derived growth factor-BB in, 56f
  platelets in, 28, 32
  in veterinary dentistry, 339
Armamentarium
  Bio-PRF bowl, 118, 120, 120f
  Bio-PRF box, 118, 120, 120f, 137f
  Bio-PRF butterfly needles, 119
  Bio-PRF centrifuge, 7f, 118, 119
  Bio-PRF double spoon, 119
  Bio-PRF forceps, 118
  Bio-PRF large compactor, 119
  Bio-PRF pad, 119
  Bio-PRF scissors, 118
  Bio-PRF small compactor, 119
  Bio-PRF tourniquet, 119
  Bio-PRF tray, 118, 120, 120f
  Bio-PRF tube holder, 118, 120, 120f
  instrument set, 118–119, 121, 121f
  overview of, 117–118
  red cap tubes, 119
  white top tubes, 119
Arestin, 355
Arthroscopy, of temporomandibular joint, 281, 282f
Autografts
  bone void after harvesting, PRF filling of, 283, 283f
  horizontal ridge augmentation uses of, 241
  periodontal regeneration uses of, 169
Autologous conditioned serum, 337
Avulsed teeth, 311, 311f–312f

B

Barrier membranes
  collagen. *See* Collagen barrier membrane.
  in guided bone regeneration. *See* Guided bone regeneration, barrier membranes in.
  in periodontal regeneration, 169
Basilic vein, 124f–126f, 127
Bio-Bone protocol, 99, 145, 145f, 358
Bio-Cool device, 105, 143f
Bio-Filler
  facial esthetics uses of, 357–358
  production protocol for, 142f, 142–143
Bio-Graft, 139, 139f
Bio-Heat
  description of, 318, 358
  device for, 103, 103f, 115f, 213
Biologic agents, for periodontal regeneration, 169–170
Bio-PRF bowl, 118, 120, 120f
Bio-PRF box, 118, 120, 120f, 137f
Bio-PRF butterfly needles, 119, 122, 122f
Bio-PRF centrifuge, 7f, 118, 119
Bio-PRF cylinders, 137f
Bio-PRF double spoon, 119, 121
Bio-PRF forceps, 118
Bio-PRF large compactor, 119
Bio-PRF pad, 119
Bio-PRF scissors, 118
Bio-PRF small compactor, 119
Bio-PRF tourniquet, 119, 122, 122f
Bio-PRF tray, 118, 120, 120f
Bio-PRF tube holder, 118, 120, 120f
Bioprinting, 340
Bisphosphonate-related osteonecrosis of the jaw, 276
Bisphosphonates, 214, 276
Blood
  components of, 12–13, 13t
  growth factors in, 15–16
  in wound healing, 12, 13t
Bloodletting, 124
Bone augmentation
  alveolar. *See* Horizontal ridge augmentation; Vertical ridge augmentation.
  in veterinary dentistry, 339
Bone defects after cystectomy, 282, 283f
Bone grafts. *See also specific graft.*
  in endodontic microsurgery, 308
  for furcation defects, 169
  in guided bone regeneration, 239
  in periodontal regeneration, 169
  PRF with
    advantages of, 241
    for extraction sockets, 149–150, 149f–150f, 202t–203t, 202–204, 213f, 214
    implant placement timing and, 271
    for intrabony defects, 170, 171t–173t, 177
    for ridge preservation, 210, 211f–213f
    for sinus augmentation, 263f, 265–267
    for sinus grafting, 259–260, 260f, 261t–262t, 264, 269–270, 269f–270f
  sinus elevation with, 254
  types of, 169
Brachial artery, 124, 125f–126f

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BRONJ. *See* Bisphosphonate-related osteonecrosis of the jaw.
Buffy coat zone
C-PRF collection in, 36
definition of, 61
leukocytes in, 6–7, 138
liquid-PRF draw from, 138
Butterfly needles, 119, 122, 122f, 128

C

Cartilage regeneration, 336, 337f
CBC. *See* Complete blood count.
CD11b, 41f
Cell-occlusiveness properties, 235
Cells
in PPP, 13–14
in PRF
description of, 13–14
quantification of, 23–37
Cementum, 168f
Centrifugation
A-PRF protocol, 6, 6f
cell quantification after, 25, 25f–26f
devices used in, 20, 20f
fixed-angle. *See* Fixed-angle centrifugation.
goal of, 47, 72
horizontal. *See* Horizontal centrifugation.
layer formation in, 4, 5f
leukocytes after, 6f
Centrifugation protocols
A-PRF. *See* A-PRF, centrifugation protocol for.
C-PRF, 95, 96f, 99f, 99–100, 100f
i-PRF. *See* i-PRF, centrifugation protocols.
liquid-PRF, 85–86, 86f, 138, 138f
L-PRF, 26–28, 27f, 32f
overview of, 95
solid-PRF, 96, 96f–97f
Centrifugation speed
improvements in, 348
liquid-PRF volume affected by, 356f
platelet-rich fibrin affected by, 14
Centrifugation tubes
A-PRF, 86–87, 87f
cell accumulation in, 54, 56f
characteristics of, 83
chemical additives in, 351, 352f
chemical modification to, PRF membrane improvements after, 90–91
cost of, 83
development of, 351
g-force calculation, 76
glass tubes
silica-coated plastic tubes vs., 85–86
silicone added to, 93
holder for, 118, 120, 120f, 129
hydrophilic, 83–84, 90
hydrophobic, 83–84
importance of, 83, 351
length of, 52, 53f
liquid-PRF, 84f, 122, 122f
platelet-rich fibrin membrane size dependent on, 85–86
PRF clot with
clotting speed, 84f, 84–85
description of, 20
in glass tubes vs. silica-coated plastic tubes, 85–86
size of, 85–86, 86f, 89, 89f
silica additives to
amorphous silica, 92
A-PRF contamination from, 86–87
crystalline silica, 92
description of, 351
human periosteal cells affected by, 87, 88f, 92
PRF clot size affected by, 89, 89f
silica-coated plastic tubes
glass tubes vs, 85–86
silica microparticle contamination in A-PRF from, 86–87
silica microparticle cytotoxic effects on human periosteal cells, 87, 88f
silicone additives to, 89, 89f, 93
solid-PRF, 122, 122f
for solid-PRF, 84f
titanium, 90–92
vacuum, 129, 132
walls of, clot activation from, 85
Cephalic vein, 124f–126f, 127
Cheek
posterior, atrophy of, 324f
PRF injections in, 324, 325f
volume enhancements in, 325
Chondromalacia, 280
Chronic wounds
healthcare expenditures on, 330
incidence of, 330
Cleft lip and palate reconstruction, 284, 284f–285f
Clotting. *See also* Fibrin clots.
anticoagulant effects on, 3–4
oxygen's role in, 12
Coagulation pathway, 85
Col1a1, 42, 45
Col1a2, 107
Collagen, 332
Collagen barrier membrane
gingival recession root coverage uses of, 164
guided bone regeneration uses of, 237, 238f, 248–249
PRF membranes with, 248–249
Collagen induction therapy, 319
Collagenous proteins, 293
Complete blood count, 24, 24f
Concentrated platelet-rich fibrin. *See* C-PRF.
Connective tissue graft, 148–149
Coronally advanced flap, 148
C-PRF
biocompatibility of, 67–68
cells in, 35f–36f
cellular activity of, 67–68
centrifugation protocol, 99f, 99–100, 100f
growth factor release from, 67, 69
harvesting of, 34f
history of, 7–9
on horizontal centrifuge, 65–68, 65f–68f
indications for, 99–100, 100b
i-PRF into, 33–37, 34f–37f
platelets in, 37t
protocol for, 141, 141f
Crestal sinus augmentation, 266f–268f, 271
CTG. *See* Connective tissue graft.
Cystectomy, bone defects after, 282, 283f
Cytokines, 12

D

Deep stromal paracentral ulcer, 341f
Degradation, 113, 234, 351
Demineralized freeze-dried bone allograft
description of, 169
PRF added to, 203
Dendritic cells, 42f
Dentin matrix protein 1, 294
Dentin regeneration, 292
Dentin sialophosphoprotein, 294
Dermal fillers, 322
Dermapen microneedling device, 319, 319f
DFDBA. *See* Demineralized freeze-dried bone allograft.
Diabetic foot ulcers, 332–333, 333f, 358
Direct pulp capping, 294–297, 295f–296f, 295t
Dorsal forearm veins, 128, 128f
Double spoon, 119, 121
Drug-delivery system, 355
Duo Quattro, 30–31, 31f, 79f

E

Ear, nose, and throat, 334–335
Ear trauma, 333, 333f
Edentulous maxilla
sinus grafting in. *See* Sinus grafting.
vascularity issues in, 253–254
EGF. *See* Epidermal growth factor.
EMD. *See* Enamel matrix derivative.
Enamel matrix derivative
coronally advanced flap and, for gingival recession root coverage, 152, 154t–155t, 156
periodontal regeneration uses of, 167, 169
Endodontics, regenerative
apexification, 300–302, 301f, 301t–302t, 303f
avulsed teeth, 311, 311f–312f
definition of, 292
description of, 150
direct pulp capping, 294–297, 295f–296f, 295t
microsurgery, 308t–309t, 308–309, 310f
overview of, 291
pulpotomy, 297–299, 298t, 299f–300f
revascularization, 303, 304f–308f
summary of, 313
EndOzLase protocol, 295f, 313
End-stage renal disease, 331f
Epidermal growth factor, 16
e-PRF
antibiotic delivery using, 355
applications of, 115f
biocompatibility of, 109f–112f, 109–110
biodegradation of, 109f–112f, 109–110
biologic characterization of, 107, 107f–108f
cheek volume enhancements using, 325

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definition of, 101
growth factor release from, 107
guided bone regeneration applications of, 249
histologic findings, 112f
illustration of, 113
injection of, 318
papilla volume augmentation uses of, 114f
protocol for producing, 103–106, 103f–106f, 143–144, 144f
sinus grafting uses of, 271
spinal disc repair uses of, 340, 341f–342f
stability of, 101
sticky bone and, 145
wound healing/regeneration uses of, 349f
Equine sports medicine, 337–339, 338f–339f
Erectile dysfunction, 335
Er:YAG lasers
decontamination uses of, 357f
for periodontal decontamination, 184, 185f
for pulp exposure, 296, 296f
Extended-PRF. *See* e-PRF.
Extracellular matrix, 2
Extraction sockets/site management
alveolar bone
loss of, 191
remodeling of, 196
in bisphosphonate patients, 214
bone grafts for
with PRF, 149–150, 149f–150f, 202t–203, 202–204, 213f, 214
types of, 194–195
dimensional changes after extraction
biomaterials for minimizing of, 194–195, 220
bone resorption, 192, 193f
cone-beam computed tomography of, 192, 192f
natural types of, 190–193, 191f–192f
socket grafting, 194–195
systematic reviews regarding, 213–214
tooth loss effects on, 214
flap elevation during, 214
healing process, 190, 191f
illustration of, 191f
mandibular third molars, 149, 204t–208t, 204–209, 211f
natural wound healing for, 196t–197t, 196–201, 199f–201f
overview of, 149, 189
pain management after, 209
PRF for, 220
bone grafts and, 149–150, 149f–150f, 202t–203t, 202–203, 213f, 214
clinical procedure, 209–212, 210f–211f
clinical studies of, 196t–198t
immediate implant placement and, 224f–225f
infection prevention, 209
mandibular third molars, 204t–208t, 204–209, 211f
membrane fabrication, 212f
natural wound healing versus, 196t–197t, 196–201, 199f–201f
pain management uses, 209
timing of, 210
radiographic examination, 192f
ridge preservation in
bone grafts for, 210, 211f–213f
description of, 189, 192, 194–195
PRF for, 196, 210f–213f
soft tissue healing in
barriers for, 213
PRF effects on, 196, 201, 214
summary of, 214

F

Face
anatomy of, 320–321
arterial system of, 323f
regions of, 323–325
vascular "danger zones" in, 322–323
venous system of, 323f
Facial esthetics
autologous PRF in, 318
Bio-Filler in, 357–358
case study of, 328f
description of, 150
products used in, 317
Facial rejuvenation, 318
FDBA. *See* Freeze-dried bone allograft.
Fibrin
definition of, 14
growth factor binding to, 350
Fibrin clots
antimicrobial activity of, 46
biologic signature of, 78
centrifugation time effects on, 77f–78f
centrifugation tube effects on, 20, 85
formation of, 14, 148
H-PRF. *See* H-PRF, clots.
imaging of, 15f
location of, 77, 78f
low-speed centrifugation production of, 20
L-PRF. *See* L-PRF, clots.
as PRF plugs, 234
relative centrifugal force values at, 76–78
size of, centrifugation tube effects on, 85–86, 86f
Fibrinogen, 14
Fibroblasts, 13
Fistula repair, 335
Fixed-angle centrifugation
angle produced by, 54, 55f
cell distribution with, 61f
disadvantages of, 7, 9f
horizontal centrifugation versus, 8f, 38, 39f, 53f, 57f
Foot ulcers, diabetic, 332–333, 333f, 358
Forehead lines, 324f
Fotona Lightwalker system, 356, 357f
Freeze-dried bone allograft, 169, 195f
Furcation defects, periodontal regeneration of
allografts for, 169
bone grafts for, 169
PRF for, 180, 181f, 182f–183t
FXIIa-AT/C1 esterase inhibitor, 91–92

G

GBR. *See* Guided bone regeneration.
GEM 21S, 1
g-force, 52, 71–72, 74, 76–78. *See also* Relative centrifugal force.
Gingival recession root coverage
clinical studies regarding, 152–158, 153f, 154t–155t
collagen membranes for, 164
coronally advanced flap for
harvesting of, 158
studies of, 152, 154t–155t, 156
coronally advanced flap/amniotic membrane for, 152, 154t–155t, 158
coronally advanced flap/connective tissue graft for, 152, 154t–155t, 156
coronally advanced flap/connective tissue graft/PRF for, 152, 154t–155t, 156
coronally advanced flap/enamel matrix derivative for, 152, 154t–155t, 156
coronally advanced flap/PRF
procedure for, 158–165, 161f–163f
root conditioning in, 160
studies of, 152, 154t–155t, 156
summary of, 164
illustration of, 145f, 159f
overview of, 148–149
prevalence of, 152
PRF for, 157f
Glass tubes
silica-coated plastic tubes vs., 85–86
silicone added to, 93
Growth factors. *See also specific growth factor.*
in blood, 15–16
bone formation in guided bone regeneration using, 239
in cartilage repair, 336
commercialization of, 1
C-PRF release of, 67, 69
e-PRF release of, 107
fibrin binding of, 350
half-life of, 15
implant surface enhanced with, 230
i-PRF release of, 67
low-speed centrifugation release of, 18f
periodontal regeneration uses of, 169–170
platelet release of, 13
PRF release of, 16–17, 17f
PRP release of, 16–17, 17f, 21, 22f
slow release of, 3
in tissue engineering, 5
types of, 15–16
in wound healing, 15
Guided bone regeneration
in anterior mandible, 245f–246f
applications of, 234
barrier membranes in
absorbable, 236t, 237
clinical studies of, 236t
collagen-based absorbable, 237, 238f, 248–249

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description of, 233
dPTFE, 194f, 236t, 237f
expanded PTFE, 234, 236t
high-density PTFE, 194f, 236t, 237f
natural biodegradable, 236t
nonresorbable PTFE, 236t, 237, 237f
PRF as, 239, 248, 250
synthetic absorbable, 236t, 237
titanium mesh, 235, 236t, 237, 238f, 249
biomaterials in, 235
bone formation in
animal studies of, 240
growth factors for, 239
bone grafts in, 239
buccal bone regeneration, 247f
e-PRF in, 249
history of, 233–234
horizontal ridge augmentation uses of, 241–242, 242f–243f
implant survival rates with, 234
Khoury plate technique, 246, 247f
lingual bone regeneration, 247f
options for, 235–239, 236t, 237f–238f
overview of, 234–235
PRF in
animal studies using, 241
as barrier membrane, 239, 248, 250
clinical procedures for, 241–247, 242f–247f
clinical studies of, 236t, 239–240, 240t
with collagen barrier membranes, 248–250
description of, 150
future of, 249
titanium membranes and, 249–250
principle of, 235f
titanium mesh barrier membrane in, 235, 236t, 237, 238f, 249
tunneling technique, 249, 250f
vertical ridge augmentation uses of, 242, 243f–244f, 359f
Guided tissue regeneration
barrier membranes for, 169
PRF membranes for, 102
Gynecology, 335

H

Hair regeneration, 325–326, 327f
Hand veins, 128, 128f
Hank's balanced salt solution, 311
Heat-compression technique, 102
Heat-treated PRF, 352–355, 353f–354f. *See also* e-PRF.
Hematocrit count, 348
Hemostasis, platelets in, 12
Horizontal centrifugation
advantages of, 38, 56
angle produced by, 54, 55f
A-PRF on, 58f
Bio-PRF centrifuge used in, 7f
cell distribution with, 61f
cell layer separation using, 38, 40f
clots produced on, 57
C-PRF on, 65–68, 65f–68f
description of, 38
fixed-angle centrifugation versus, 8f, 38, 39f, 53f, 57f
H-PRF clots on
histologic observation of, 60f
microscopic observation of, 58–61, 60f
morphology of, 58f
surface of, 60f
leukocyte concentration with, 38, 350
L-PRF clots on
blood layer, 55f
histologic observation of, 58–61, 59f
illustration of, 55f
microscopic observation of, 58–61, 59f
morphology of, 58f–59f
platelet distribution with, 64
protocols, 61–65, 62f–64f
radius in, 52–53
spin time with, 53, 54f
system selection, 119
Horizontal ridge augmentation
implant placement and, 285f
technique for, 241–242, 242f–244f, 250f
hPDLCs. *See* Human periodontal ligament cells.
H-PRF
antibacterial properties of, 46f
blood layer separation of, on horizontal centrifugation, 55f
clots
histologic observation of, 60f
microscopic observation of, 58–61, 60f
morphology of, 58f
surface of, 60f
history of, 7–9
wound healing/regeneration uses of, 349f
Human dental pulp cells, 292f–293f
Human periodontal ligament cells, 42–44, 43f
Human periosteal cells, 87, 88f, 92

I

IGF. *See* Insulin-like growth factor.
Immune cells, 41, 41f–42f
Immunocompromised patients, 360–361
Implant(s)
bone healing around, 220
bone-to-implant contact in, 219
buccal gap defects, 223
in deficient ridge, 228, 228f
delayed placement of, 228f, 271
full-arch, 230f
horizontal ridge augmentation and, 285f
immediate placement of
buccal gap with, 223, 224f
flapless elevation and, 224f–225f
full-arch, 230f
PRF with, 221, 227f, 229f
simultaneous ridge split with, 229f
soft tissue healing during, 227f
implant stability quotient in, 219–220
lingual placement of, 224f
liquid-PRF coating of, 230
osseointegration of, 221t–222t, 230
overview of, 149, 219
peri-implantitis
causes of, 226
peri-implant defects caused by, 225
PRF for, 220, 221t–222t, 223
PRF for
clinical studies of, 220–223, 221t–222t
fragments, 224f–225f
at osteotomy preparation, 230
overview of, 219
peri-implant defects, 223, 225
peri-implantitis management using, 220, 221t–222t, 223
in sinus grafting, 254, 258f, 259, 267f, 270
soft tissue healing, 220, 221t, 227f–228f
in split flap, 228
stability benefits of, 220–222
sinus augmentation and, 271
socket shield approach to placement of, 226f
soft tissue healing around
clinical studies of, 221t–222t, 222, 226–229, 227f–228f
description of, 219
PRF for, 220, 221t, 227f–228f
stability of, 220–222, 226
surface modification of, with growth factors, 230
tissue healing around, 219
zirconia, 358, 359f
Injectable platelet-rich fibrin. *See* i-PRF.
Injections, PRF
in cheek, 324
combination approaches using, 328, 328f
description of, 318
in face
anatomy of, 320–321
commonly requested areas, 324f
regions, 323–325, 324f
vascular "danger zones," 322–323
hair regeneration uses of, 325–326, 327f
PRF types used in, 318
regional, 320–325
Instrument set, 118–119, 121, 121f
Insulin-like growth factor, 16, 336
Interleukin-1ß, 41
Interleukin-6, 41
Intra-articular injections, 281
Intrabony defects, periodontal regeneration of
allografts for, 169
bone grafts for, 169
PRF for
alendronate and, 172t
bone graft versus, 170, 171t–173t, 177
clinical studies, 170–177, 171t–174t, 175f–176f
description of, 148, 149f
enamel matrix derivative and, 172t, 174t
illustration of, 178f–179f
metformin and, 172t
open flap debridement and, 170, 171t, 173t
procedure, 177–179, 178f–179f
statins and, 172t–174t
summary of, 184–185
three-wall, 178f–180f
two-wall, 178f
Intra-Lock, 80f

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IntraSpin protocol, 30, 30f, 79
i-PRF
analgesic effects of, 281
biocompatibility of, 67–68
cellular activity of, 67–68
centrifugation protocols
cell quantification after, 30–31, 30f–31f
centrifugation speed for, 348
C-PRF protocol versus, 65f
description of, 8, 30–31, 65
Duo Quattro, 30–31, 31f
leukocyte concentration after, 30, 37f
manufacturer's recommendations, 33
original, 31
pitfalls in, 33
platelet concentration after, 30
dendritic cell maturation affected by, 42f
development of, 20–23, 21f–23f
drawing of, 138f
growth factor release from, 22f, 67
history of, 6
microstructures of, 21f
optimization of, into C-PRF, 33–37, 34f–37f
platelet-rich plasma versus, 23
platelets in, 6
regenerative potential of, 23
summary of, 7
temporomandibular joint disorders treated with, 348–349

J
Jaw, osteonecrosis of. *See* Osteonecrosis of the jaw.

K
Khoury plate technique, 246, 247f

L
Lasers
Er:YAG
decontamination uses of, 357f
for periodontal decontamination, 184, 185f
for pulp exposure, 296, 296f
Nd:YAG, 356
PRF and, 356–357, 357f
Lateral canthal lines, 324f
Lateral window closure, 261t, 262, 263f, 264, 270f
Leachate, 46
Leg ulcers, venous, 332–333
Leukocyte(s)
anti-inflammatory properties of, 300
in buffy coat zone, 6–7
harvesting of, 14
histology of, 6f
horizontal centrifugation effects on concentration of, 38, 350
host defense functions of, 14
illustration of, 52f
in i-PRF, 6, 37f
regeneration from, 350
in wound healing, 4–5, 14
Leukocyte platelet-rich fibrin. *See* L-PRF.
Lichen planus, 360f
Ligament regeneration, 336
Lipopolysaccharides, 41, 44f, 293
Liquid-PRF. *See also* i-PRF.
albumin gel vs, 104f
alkaline phosphatase activity induced by, 43
antibiotic delivery using, 355
antibiotics added to, 313
anti-inflammatory properties of, 44f
Bio-Filler fabricated from, 142
biomolecules added to, 313
centrifugation speed effects on, 356f
drug-delivery system uses of, 355
in equine sports medicine, 337–338, 338f
injection of, 318
osteoarthritis uses of, 150
osteogenic differentiation promoted with, 44, 45f
protocol, 85–86, 86f, 138
recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2 added to, 313, 355
regenerative endodontics application of, 294
temporomandibular joint injection of, 280f
tubes for, 122, 122f
veterinary dentistry uses of, 339f
wound healing/regeneration uses of, 349f
Low-speed centrifugation concept
advantages of, 19–20
A-PRF protocol with, 29, 32
cellular bioactivity benefits of, 19
definition of, 61
description of, 18–19
growth factor release, 18f
validation of, 348
L-PRF
advantages of, 4–5
antibacterial properties of, 46f
blood layer separation of, on horizontal centrifugation, 55f
cells in
description of, 13–14
leukocytes, 26–28, 27f, 32
quantification of, 26–28, 27f
centrifugal force studies, 74t–75t, 74–76
centrifugation protocol for, 26–28, 27f, 32f, 97–98, 98b, 98f, 138, 138f
clots
blood layer, 55f
histologic observation of, 58–61, 59f
illustration of, 55f
microscopic observation of, 58–61, 59f
morphology of, 58f–59f
description of, 6, 9
development of, 20
harvesting of, 20, 21f
histologic findings, 6f, 111f
history of, 4–5
morphology and size, 58, 58f
protocol for, 4–5
relative centrifugal force studies, 74t–75t, 74–76
summary of, 7
LSCC. *See* Low-speed centrifugation concept.

M
Macromolecules, 355f
Macrophages, 41, 350
Mandibular third molar extraction, 149, 204t–208t, 204–209, 211f
Marionette lines, 323, 324f, 328f
Matrix metalloproteinase-1, 297
Matrix metalloproteinase-3, 297
Median basilic vein, 127
Median cubital vein, 124f, 126f, 127
Median nerve, 125f–126f
Median vein, 126f, 127
Medication-related osteonecrosis of the jaw, 276, 279f, 287
Membranes. *See* Barrier membranes; PRF membranes.
Meniscus repair, 336, 337f
Mesenchymal stem cells, 15, 239, 337
Microneedling, 319–320, 321f, 328
Microsurgery, endodontic, 308t–309t, 308–309, 310f
Mineral trioxide aggregate, 294, 297, 300–301
Monocytes, 37f, 37t
MRONJ. *See* Medication-related osteonecrosis of the jaw.
MSCs. *See* Mesenchymal stem cells.
Multisonic irrigation, 313, 313f
Musculocutaneous nerve, 125f

N
Nasolabial fold, 324f
Natural guided regeneration, 358

O
OCN, 43, 45
Odontoblasts, 292f–293f
ONJ. *See* Osteonecrosis of the jaw.
Oral and maxillofacial surgery
bone defects after cystectomy, 282, 283f
cleft lip and palate reconstruction, 284, 284f–285f
description of, 150, 275–276
oroantral communication, 284, 286f
osteonecrosis of the jaw. *See* Osteonecrosis of the jaw.
Oroantral communication, 284, 286f
Osseodensification burs, 267, 268f
Osteoarthritis, 150
Osteoclasts, 191
Osteoinduction, 351
Osteonecrosis of the jaw
adjunctive therapies for, 276
bisphosphonate-related, 276
description of, 214, 275
illustration of, 276f
medication-related, 276, 279f, 287
PRF for
clinical procedure, 279, 279f

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clinical studies regarding, 276–279, 277t–278t, 286, 348
recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2 and, 287
summary of, 286–287
Ozone therapy, 313

P

Pain management, 158, 209, 261t–262t
Palatal wounds, 334
PDGF. *See* Platelet-derived growth factor.
Percutaneous collagen induction, 319
Peri-implant defects, 223, 225
Peri-implantitis
causes of, 226
peri-implant defects caused by, 225
PRF for, 220, 221t–222t, 223
PerioChip, 355
Periocular lines, 324f
Periodontal disease
in dogs, 339
in humans, 168, 184
Periodontal ligament, 168, 168f
Periodontal ligament cells, 311
Periodontal pocket, 357f
Periodontal regeneration
animal models of, 349, 349f
barrier membranes in, 169
biologic agents for, 169–170
bone grafts for, 169
clot stability for, 167
enamel matrix derivative for, 167
furcation defects. *See* Furcation defects.
growth factors for, 169–170
intrabony defects. *See* Intrabony defects.
PRF for, 349
Periodontitis, 168
Periodontium, 168, 168f
Perioral lines, 323, 324f
Personal protective equipment, 130
Peyronie's disease, 335
Phagocytosis, 5
Phlebotomist, 129
Phlebotomy. *See also* Venipuncture.
antecubital veins
H-pattern, 125f, 127
M-pattern, 126f, 127
equipment for
gauge needles, 128, 128f
needles, 128–129
tube holders, 129
vacuum, 129, 132
vascular anatomy in, 124–128, 124f–128f
Photodynamic therapy, 184
Plasma heating, 102–103
Plasma rich in growth factors, 3
Plastic surgery, 333, 333f
Platelet(s)
aggregates, 21f
in C-PRF, 37t
growth factor release by, 13
hemostatic role of, 12
illustration of, 52f
in i-PRF, 6, 37t
platelet-derived growth factor from, 16
properties of, 13t
titanium-induced aggregation of, 92
Platelet concentrates
applications of, 2
evolution of, 1–10
goals for, 11, 13, 102
Platelet-derived growth factor, 336
autologous, 48
cell recruitment uses of, 2f
half-life of, 16
platelets as source of, 16
properties of, 16
recombinant, 16
Platelet-derived growth factor-AA, 17f, 68f, 107, 108f
Platelet-derived growth factor-AB, 17f, 68f, 107, 108f
Platelet-derived growth factor-BB
in A-PRF matrix, 56f
in e-PRF matrix, 107, 108f
protein quantification of, 68f
recombinant, 16
Plugs, solid-PRF, 136, 136f–137f
PPP, 101
in e-PRF membrane fabrication, 143
heat-compression technique, 102
PRF
advanced. *See* A-PRF.
advantages of, 14, 184, 234, 248, 254, 263, 276, 293
albumin-. *See* e-PRF.
antibacterial properties of, 42–46
anti-inflammatory properties of, 42–46
biologic activity of, on immune cells, 41, 41f–42f
bone grafts with. *See* Bone grafts.
cells in
description of, 13–14
quantification of, 23–37
components of, 5f
concentrated. *See* C-PRF.
degradation of, 113, 234, 351
disadvantages of, 101–102
extended. *See* e-PRF.
future uses of, 347
growth factor release by, 16–17, 17f
heat-treated, 352–355, 353f–354f. *See also* e-PRF.
history of, 1, 102, 254, 330
horizontal centrifugation-obtained. *See* H-PRF.
indications for, 96. *See also specific indication.*
injectable. *See* i-PRF.
limitations of, 102
liquid. *See* Liquid-PRF; i-PRF.
PRP and, comparisons between, 3, 4f, 15–17, 17f
solid. *See* Solid-PRF.
tissue engineering with, 5, 48
titanium-prepared, 92
tubes. *See* Centrifugation tubes.
PRF membranes
age effects on, 47–48, 48f, 76
centrifugation tube chemical modification effects on, 90–91
coagulation factor release by, 85
on extraction socket, 212f
guided tissue regeneration uses of, 102
H-PRF, 61f
low-speed centrifugation fabrication of, 19
L-PRF, 61f
mechanical strength of, 90–92
orientation of, 56f
sex effects on, 47–48, 48f, 76
size of
age effects on, 47–48, 48f, 76
centrifugation tube effects on, 85–86
sex effects on, 47–48, 48f, 76
outcomes of, 47f, 47–48
solid-PRF, 136, 136f–137f
PRGF. *See* Plasma rich in growth factors.
Protected bone augmentation, 235
PRP
advances in, 3
advantages of, 20
cells in, 13–14
definition of, 3
description of, 254
drawbacks of, 254
goal of, 3
growth factor release by, 16–17, 17f, 21, 33
history of, 1–4
i-PRF versus, 23
limitations of, 3
PRF and, comparison between, 3, 4f, 15–17, 17f
Pulp
infections of, 349
inflammation of, 291
PRF advantages for, 293
Pulp capping, direct, 294–297, 295f–296f, 295t
Pulp regeneration, 349
Pulpotomy, 297–299, 298t, 299f–300f

R

Radial artery, 125f–126f
Radius, with horizontal centrifugation, 52–53
Randomized controlled trials, 148
RBCs. *See* Red blood cells.
RCF. *See* Relative centrifugal force.
RCF-clot, 76, 77f
RCF-max, 52f
RCF-mix, 52f
Recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2, 244, 278, 287, 313, 355
Recombinant human fibroblast growth factor-2, 169
Recombinant platelet-derived growth factor-BB, 16
Red blood cells
density of, 13, 13t
illustration of, 52f
properties of, 13t
Red cap tubes, 119
Regenerative endodontics
apexification, 300–302, 301f, 301t–302t, 303f

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avulsed teeth, 311, 311f–312f
definition of, 292
direct pulp capping, 294–297, 295f–296f, 295t
microsurgery, 308t–309t, 308–309, 310f
overview of, 291
pulpotomy, 297–299, 298t, 299f–300f
revascularization, 303, 304f–308f
summary of, 313
Regenerative medicine, 148
Relative centrifugal force
at bottom of tubes, 76
calculation of, 72f, 72–73, 78–81
definition of, 72
description of, 71
inaccuracies in reporting of, 73t
L-PRF, 74t–75t, 74–76
PRF clot, 76–78
schematic diagram of, 72f
values
calculation of, 78–81
confusion regarding, 73–74
at PRF clot, 76–78
standardized reporting of, 78
Revascularization, endodontic, 303, 304f–308f
Rheumatology, 335–336
rhFGF-2. *See* Recombinant human fibroblast growth factor-2.
Root coverage for gingival recession. *See* Gingival recession root coverage.
Runx2, 42, 45

S

Sex, PRF membrane size affected by, 47–48, 48f, 76
Sharpey fibers, 148, 168, 184
Silica additives
amorphous silica, 92
A-PRF contamination from, 86–87
crystalline silica, 92
description of, 351
human periosteal cells affected by, 87, 88f, 92
PRF clot size affected by, 89, 89f
Silicone addition to centrifugation tubes, 89, 89f, 93
Sinus augmentation
crestal, 266f–268f, 271
lateral window closure in, 261t, 262, 263f
PRF for
bone graft and, 265–267
clinical procedure in, 269–270, 269f–270f
clinical studies of, 198t, 261t
flowchart for, 265f
osseodensification burs used with, 267, 268f
recommendations for, 264–269, 265f–269f
simultaneous implant placement, 265, 271
sinus size issues, 265–266, 269
simultaneous implant placement with, 265, 271
size issues in, 265
Sinus elevation procedures
bone grafts with, 254
lateral, 269f–270f
PRF for, 150, 269f–270f
Sinus grafting
crestal, 266f–268f, 271
e-PRF for, 271
maxillary, 260
overview of, 253–254
PRF for
advantages of, 270
Bio-Oss and, 254
bone graft and, 259–260, 260f, 261t–262t, 264, 269–270, 269f–270f
case example of, 256f–259f
clinical recommendations for, 264–269, 265f–269f
clinical studies regarding, 254–259, 255t–256t
imaging of, 256f–259f
implant placement with, 254, 258f, 259, 265, 267f, 270
lateral window closure, 261t, 262, 263f, 264, 270f
pain management, 261t–262t, 271
ß-tricalcium phosphate and, 254
wound healing benefits of, 261t–262t
summary of, 271
Sinus membrane perforations, 263f, 263–264
Skin regeneration
combination approaches in, 328, 328f
microneedling, 319–320, 321f, 328
PRF in, 318–320
Soft tissue healing
in extraction site management
barriers for, 213
PRF effects on, 196, 201, 214
implants
clinical studies of, 221t–222t, 222, 226–229, 227f–228f
description of, 219
PRF for, 220, 221t, 227f–228f
Soft tissue regeneration, 334–335
Soft tissue vestibular extension, 358–359, 359f–360f
Solid-PRF
centrifugation protocols, 96, 96f–97f, 136
description of, 9
membrane fabrication, 136, 136f–137f
plug fabrication, 136, 136f–137f
tubes for, 122, 122f
Spin time, on horizontal centrifuge, 53, 54f
Spinal disc repair, 340, 341f–342f
Sports medicine
equine, 337–339, 338f–339f
human, 335–336
Stem cells
mesenchymal, 15, 239, 337
from whole blood, 350
in whole blood, 15
Sticky bone, 210, 354f
bone grafts, 250, 259
definition of, 139
description of, 96, 98
e-PRF and, 145
protocol for, 139–140, 140f
in sinus grafting with PRF and bone graft, 270
Stress urinary incontinence, 335
Subclavian vein, 125f–126f
Subepithelial connective tissue graft harvesting, 334f
"Superclot," 14, 167
Swing-out bucket centrifugation, 7

T

Temporomandibular joint
anatomy of, 280
arthroscopy of, 281, 282f
intra-articular injections in, 281
liquid-PRF injection in, 280f
synovium of, 280
Temporomandibular joint disorders, 280–281, 348–349
Tendons
equine injuries, 339
regeneration of, 336
TGF-ß. *See* Transforming growth factor-ß.
3D bone allograft block, 352–355, 353f–354f
3D fibrin network
advantages of, 14–15
growth factor in, 14
Tissue engineering
components of, 5, 5f
future of, 340
growth factors in, 5
platelet-rich fibrin for, 5, 48
Titanium mesh barrier membrane, in guided bone regeneration, 235, 236t, 237, 238f, 249
Titanium-PRF tubes, 90–92
Toe melanoma, 334f
Tooth extractions. *See also* Extraction sockets/site management.
bone loss after, 191, 193f
healing after, 190, 191f
radiographic examination after, 192f
Tooth loss
alveolar ridge changes after, 190, 220
causes of, 190
Tourniquet, 119, 122, 122f
Bio-PRF, 119, 122, 122f
venipuncture, 130, 133f
Transforming growth factor-ß
cell proliferation uses of, 2f
e-PRF membrane release of, 107
properties of, 16
Transforming growth factor-ß1
PPP release of, 17f
PRF release of, 17f
properties of, 16
Transilluminator device, 130, 130f, 133f
Trauma
avulsed teeth, 311, 311f–312f
ear, 333, 333f
ß-tricalcium phosphate with collagen, 202
Trichometry, 326
Tubes. *See* Centrifugation tubes.

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U

Ulcers
  abdominal, 331f
  diabetic foot, 332–333, 333f, 358
  venous leg, 332–333
Ulnar nerve, 125f–126f
Urinary incontinence, stress, 335
Urology, 335

V

Vacuette tubes, 351
Vacuum, tube, 129, 132
Vascular endothelial growth factor
  angiogenesis inducement by, 2f
  properties of, 15–16
VEGF. *See* Vascular endothelial growth factor.
Veinlite, 130f, 130–131, 133f
Venipuncture
  bandage application after, 132, 133f
  blood collection equipment for, 131
  blood collection in, 131–132
  definition of, 129
  disinfection for, 131
  locating vein for, 130–131
  needles used in
    gauge of, 128, 128t
    insertion of, 131, 132f–133f
    withdrawal of, 132, 133f
  nerve injury associated with, 124
  steps involved in, 129–132, 130f, 132f–133f
  tourniquet for, 130, 133f
Venous leg ulcers, 332–333
Vertical ridge augmentation, 242, 243f–244f, 359f
Vestibular extension, 358–359, 359f–360f
Vestibular incision subperiosteal tunnel access, 151, 158
Vestibuloplasty, 359f
Veterinary dentistry, 339, 339f
VISTA. *See* Vestibular incision subperiosteal tunnel access.

W

WBCs. *See* White blood cells.
White blood cells
  illustration of, 52f
  properties of, 13t
White cap tubes, 119
Wound closure, after graft harvesting, 334, 335f
Wound healing
  animal models of, 349f
  anticoagulant effects on, 3
  blood components in, 12, 13t
  cartilage, 336, 337f
  description of, 2
  diabetic foot ulcers, 332–333, 333f, 358
  fibrin formation in, 14
  growth factors in, 15
  in immunocompromised patients, 360–361
  inflammatory phase of, 12, 12f
  leukocytes in, 4–5, 14
  phases of, 2, 3f, 12, 12f, 330f
  plastic surgery, 333, 333f
  PRF effects on, 261t–262t, 349f
  PRF in, 330–333, 331f, 358
  proliferative phase of, 12f, 12–13
  remodeling phase of, 12f, 12–13
  venous leg ulcers, 332–333
Wound regeneration, 330, 349f
Wrist veins, 128, 128f

Z

Zirconia implants, 358, 359f