

Appendix 4: Prolotherapy

By Becca Chambers

Prolotherapy is a therapeutic method where a natural substance, often dextrose or pumice plus an anesthetic agent, is injected into the ligaments and tendons of a joint causing an inflammatory reaction, which as it heals results in the strengthening and tightening of weakened tissues. Ligaments and tendons hold the bones of our joints together. The weakening and loosening of these essential joint stabilizing tissues, whether through injury or degenerative processes linked to internal body and organ malfunction, can cause and aggravate many disease processes in our joints resulting in chronic joint pain. Prolotherapy usually results in a permanent and sometimes dramatic decrease in pain when used appropriately and properly, and it is an entirely natural therapeutic method with no side effects

Chronic pain in our joints can be caused or worsened by a joint not held properly in place. The joint then does not move properly, causing wear and tear on cartilage, bone, ligaments, and tendons. Associated muscles will also tighten to try to compensate, causing further pain and stress in the area. Thus joint problems all over the body from head to toe, ranging from arthritis to tendonitis, dislocations, repetitive strain injuries, and even fibromyalgia and sciatica pains can sometimes be helped with prolotherapy.

The most famous proponent of prolotherapy was the Surgeon General of this country, C. Everett Koop, M.D. After successful prolotherapy for his own persistent back and leg pain, he learned the technique himself and offered it as a treatment for his own patients. Prolo is now becoming quite popular with athletes as a treatment for joint pain after injuries, but it can also be used effectively for degenerative joint problems (though few practitioners understand this application).

Why have you never heard of this effective and low risk joint therapy? Probably in large part, because prolo does not use prescription drugs or expensive equipment, so there has been no incentive for the pharmaceutical, surgical and medical device industries, which dominate the medical field, to promote this procedure. Also, because it can be applied to so many joint problems, to Western medicine it has sometimes seemed to be 'too good to be true.' There are still only several hundred physicians in North America with the specialized training necessary to perform Prolo, but its use is currently growing and its potential is great.