

## Steroid VS PRP Labrum

For a shoulder labral tear, **steroid injections** offer rapid, temporary pain relief, while **platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections** promote long-term healing and functional improvement by addressing the underlying tissue damage. The best choice depends on treatment goals, injury severity, and the patient's overall health.

### Steroid Injections

- **Mechanism:** Steroids are potent anti-inflammatory medications that reduce swelling and pain, but they do not repair damaged tissue.
- **Benefits:**
  - Provide quick, often immediate, pain relief (within days).
  - Improve short-term function and range of motion, which can aid initial physical therapy efforts.
- **Risks & Considerations:**
  - Relief is typically temporary, lasting a few weeks to several months, and symptoms often recur.
  - Repeated injections can weaken tendons and cartilage over time, increasing the risk of further damage or rupture.
  - May increase blood sugar levels temporarily in patients with diabetes.
  - Can compromise healing if surgery is needed later, especially if administered within a few months of the operation.

### Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Injections

- **Mechanism:** PRP uses the patient's own concentrated platelets and growth factors to stimulate the body's natural healing processes and promote tissue regeneration. It works by creating a controlled inflammatory response to start the repair cascade.
- **Benefits:**
  - Promotes long-term functional improvement and sustained pain relief by addressing the root cause of the injury.

- Studies suggest it may lead to a reduction in tear size in partial tears and improve long-term functional scores compared to steroids.
  - Carries a very low risk of allergic reaction or transmissible infection since it uses the patient's own blood.
  - May help patients avoid surgery in some cases of partial labral or rotator cuff tears.
- **Risks & Considerations:**
    - Initial pain relief takes longer to manifest, usually a few weeks to months, as the healing process takes time.
    - May cause temporary soreness or stiffness at the injection site.
    - Not always covered by insurance and can be costly.
    - Efficacy can vary depending on the severity of the tear and the specific PRP preparation used.

## Summary Comparison

Feature	Steroid Injections	PRP Injections
<b>Primary Effect</b>	Anti-inflammatory, pain masking	Regenerative, promotes healing
<b>Onset of Relief</b>	Rapid (days to 1 week)	Gradual (weeks to months)
<b>Duration of Effect</b>	Temporary (weeks to months)	Long-lasting/permanent if healing occurs
<b>Effect on Tissue</b>	Potential for tissue weakening with repeated use	Stimulates tissue repair
<b>Best For</b>	Quick, short-term pain relief for inflammation/bursitis	Chronic conditions and partial tears where healing is the goal

A consultation with an orthopedic specialist is essential to determine the most appropriate treatment plan for your specific condition.

