Periosteum

(from Greek περί (peri 'around') and ὀστοῦν(ostoun 'bone')) is a membrane that covers the outer surface of all bones, except at the joints of long bones.

Periosteum consists of dense irregular connective tissue. Periosteum is divided into an outer “fibrous layer” and inner “cambium layer” (or “osteogenic layer”). The fibrous layer contains fibroblasts, while the cambium layer contains progenitor cells that develop into osteoblasts. These osteoblasts are responsible for increasing the width of a long bone and the overall size of the other bone types. After a bone fracture the progenitor cells develop into osteoblasts and chondroblasts, which are essential to the healing process.

As opposed to osseous tissue, periosteum has nociceptive nerve endings, making it very sensitive to manipulation. It also provides nourishment by providing the blood supply to the body from the marrow.

Periosteum is attached to bone by strong collagenous fibers called Sharpey's fibres, which extend to the outer circumferential and interstitial lamellae. It also provides an attachment for muscles and tendons.

Periosteum that covers the outer surface of the bones of the skull is known as “pericranium” except when in reference to the layers of the scalp.