

Trigger Point Injection

General Information

Your health care provider has determined that a trigger point injection would be helpful in treating your chronic pain condition. A trigger point is a focal area of spasm and inflammation in the muscle, which can often be felt as a knot. When the trigger point is pushed, it will frequently cause pain and irritation. Trigger points can develop in any skeletal muscle in the body. Placing medication directly into the trigger point can help treat your pain, depending on the area of the body injected. These injections are commonly performed to treat a variety of pain syndromes, including:

- Headaches
- Neck pain
- Shoulder Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- Mid Back Pain
- Low Back Pain

Procedure Information: What to Expect

Prior to the injection appointment, there may be some medications that need to be stopped, and your health care provider will discuss these with you. They could include blood-thinning (anticoagulant), antiplatelet medications and/or anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, Xarelto, Coumadin, Plavix etc.

The procedure is typically performed in the office, and your provider may choose to use an ultrasound machine and/or fluoroscopy to help perform the procedure. Depending on the area injected, you may be asked to sit, stand, or lie down on the examination table. A member of the provider's team will help identify the various trigger points and mark them with a sterile surgical marker. After a cold, cleaning solution is placed on your skin, it is important not to touch the area once it is cleaned. You will then feel a pinch and a burn (much like a bee sting), which is the local anesthetic (numbing medicine). Then, a tiny needle will be placed into the trigger point(s) and medications (which may include local anesthetics, steroids, and/or anti-inflammatories) may be injected to help relieve the spasm and inflammation of the muscles and soft tissues. Band-Aid/paper tape is applied to the injection sites.

You are then escorted to the post-operative area where you will be monitored for up to 30 minutes after the injection. When you are ready to leave, the staff will give you discharge instructions and help you make a follow up appointment if one hasn't been made already.

Post-Procedure Instructions

What should I do after the injection?

- Recommend taking it easy for the rest of the day
- You **MAY** do normal routine activities such as return to work, do household tasks etc.
- **DO NOT** participate in strenuous activities
- Resume all medications as instructed by your provider
- Avoid NSAIDs for 24-48 hours if your provider gave you a Toradol injection during your trigger point
- You should not be in sitting water (baths, hot tubs, swimming pools, lakes/ponds) for three (3) days after the procedure. **Showers are OK**
- May participate in formal physical therapy sessions 72 hours after your procedure. You may continue performing your home exercise program in the interim
- Recommend a gentle massage of the area where trigger point injections were done to work the medication into the deeper muscle layers
- You may have a formal massage/dry needling 2-3 days after the injection
- Keep post-operative appointment to report relief

When will I notice relief?

- Immediate pain relief from the local anesthetic used in the injectate for a period of time
- Corticosteroids usually take two (2) or three (3) days to start working but can take up to seven (7) to ten (10) days

How long can I expect relief?

- The extent and duration of pain relief may depend on the amount of inflammation in the muscle
- In some cases, a single injection brings long-term pain relief
- **Intended goal is >50% relief for several weeks to months. If so, you may be a candidate for a repeat injection (typically no more than six trigger point injection appointments/6 months)**
 - You will need to have an office visit prior to ordering a repeat injection to document relief from previous injection(s), updated location of pain and recent physical exam

What other things can I expect?

- Some soreness around the injection site for which ice may be applied
- Elevation in blood glucose for 2-3 days (especially if you are diabetic)

Please contact our office (815) 398-9491 if you experience:

- Significant weakness in the arms or legs for more than 24 hours
- Redness or swelling around injection site for more than 24 hours
- Bladder or bowel accidents and/or numbness around the groin
- Fever or chills