

Trigger Point Injections

1. What are trigger points?

Areas of muscle that are in constant spasm can cause severe pain on movement or if pressure is applied over them. These areas are called trigger points because they can trigger or cause pain. Trigger points are found in a variety of conditions such as Myofascial Pain Syndrome, fibromyalgia, arthritis and certain neurologic disorders. Trigger points can also develop in other chronic pain conditions.

2. Why are trigger point injections given?

Trigger points are areas of muscle that go into spasm and can be felt in the muscles as tight bands or knots. The injection of local anesthetic and steroid into the trigger point stops the muscle spasm and relieves the pain. The medication decreases sensitivity of the area injects and results in a pain free period.

3. How are trigger point injections performed?

The physician will examine you and press on the effected area to determine where the trigger point(s) are located. The physician will mark the area(s) to be injected. After cleaning the skin with an antibacterial solution, the physician will place the needle into the trigger point(s). When the needle is in place, the medication will be injected and the needle removed.

4. How soon will the treatment help?

You may experience a decrease in pain shortly after the procedure. This is due to the effects of the local anesthetic. However, the pain may return later in the day. The steroid that has been injected will become effective in 48-72 hours. The steroid is the medication that will provide pain relief for a longer period of time.

5. What is the goal of trigger point injections?

Trigger point injections may decrease the amount of pain that you are experiencing even if they do not get rid of your pain permanently or completely. The injections may provide significant pain relief so that you may participate in physical therapy without being hindered by pain.

6. Are there risks or complications with trigger point injections?

As with any procedure, there is the potential for problems. Trigger point injections are very safe and any problems are rare. Problems that could occur are:

- ◆ Bleeding at the injection site
- ◆ Infections at the injection site
- ◆ Bruising

7. How should I care for myself after the injection?

You should plan to take it easy on the day of the injection. Bedrest is not required. You may resume your normal activities the day following the injection. You may continue your normal diet and medications after the procedure. To relieve any soreness at the injection site(s), you may apply ice to the site(s) 20 minutes on/ 20 minutes off on the day

of the injection. At subsequent times, you may choose to apply ice or heat. Please do not apply either for more than 20 minutes at a time.