

TRIGGER POINT INJECTIONS

WHAT TO EXPECT



One of your doctors or other health care practitioners may recommend trigger point injections to treat your muscle pain. This information will help you learn more about this treatment.

What are trigger point injections (TPIs)?

Trigger point injections are used to treat a condition called Myofascial Pain Syndrome which is when you have very painful and tender areas in muscles. A trigger point can be felt under the skin as a knot or ropiness of muscle because the muscle has stopped relaxing. The knot can twitch when touched. The twitch is called a “jump sign”. To help the muscle relax, a small needle containing local anesthetic (freezing) or normal saline is injected through the skin into the muscle to release the knot or taut band, thereby reducing pain. The intention of treatment is to reduce muscle and fascial pain and reduce muscle spasms, which improve range of motion and function.

Possible Side Effects

Common minor side effects during treatment include: discomfort, slight bleeding with injection, nausea, dizziness, sweating, skin irritation/allergy to anesthetic, and fainting.

Rare minor side effects during treatment include: “prickly feeling” (paresthesia from going into nerve), muscle spasm, skin infection, lightheaded, or unsteady on feet. This usually resolves in a few minutes.

Possible side effects after treatment include: bruising, fatigue, sleepiness, and/or increased pain or “flare-up” for several hours to days after treatment. These side effects are usually relieved by heat and rest.

Rare major side effects include: puncture of an organ (lung, bladder, or bowel) or puncture of the spinal cord. If the lung is punctured you will have chest pain and shortness of breath following treatment. If the spinal cord is punctured you may have limb numbness, weakness, and/or loss of bladder and bowel function. You will need to go to emergency by ambulance for treatment as this condition should be treated promptly.

Potential Benefits

Positive benefits to TPIs include: pain relief, loosening of tight areas, increased energy, and emotional release.

Longer term benefits include: pain reduction, increased range of motion, improved quality of life, and reduced suffering.

How to prepare for your visit

- Eat a light meal.
- Do not smoke 1 hour before treatment.
- Do not drink alcohol 4 hours before treatment.
- Take normal pain medications and other regular medications ordered by your primary care provider.
- Be well rested.
- Wear dark clothing.

What to expect during your initial trigger point injection visit

- You will be asked about pain, mood, medication and allergy history prior to an examination of your pain pattern.
- You will understand the trigger point injection procedure, risks, possible complications, and anticipated outcomes before signing the “Consent for Treatment” form.
- Treatment often happens during the first trigger point injection visit.
- Your initial treatment response and follow up plan are reviewed before the end of the visit.

After treatment instructions

- Please rest for 2 hours and avoid consuming alcohol or caffeine.
- Limit activity to low or moderate levels for 2 days after the treatment, if possible, to allow your body to recover.
- Reduce your regular activities in the first week to assess how you are managing after your treatment.
- Apply heat to the sore areas and continue your pain medications and other self- management strategies (relaxation, meditation, gentle stretching, and massage).
- You may use magnesium bisglycinate 200 mg daily with alpha lipoic acid 200 mg three times/day to improve neuropathic pain and energize the muscles.
- You can try a topical over-the-counter pain cream (Emugel) or a prescription pain cream may be prescribed. Wear gloves when applying topical pain cream and use the cream sparingly over affected areas.
- After applying pain cream, try gentle stretching or massage.

What to expect during follow up trigger point injection visits

- You will be assessed on your response to your previous trigger point injection treatment.
- You will receive a physical examination and clinical history which includes a pain assessment.
- You may have another TPI treatment and be assessed on your response.
- A plan will be made for follow up.

Community referral for trigger point injections

- Each patient will have up to six TPI treatments at CCDP. If the treatment is helping with pain control, a referral to a community provider will be made for ongoing TPIs.