

Trigger Point Injections



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A trigger point injection is used to treat painful areas in a muscle. A trigger point is a knot in the muscle that does not relax and is very sensitive to touch. When pressure is applied to the trigger point, you will feel some pain at the point of touch. You may also feel some pain in another part of the body. This is called the target zone.

The shot contains a long-acting pain reliever. Sometimes it is mixed with a steroid. This may help relieve muscle spasms and the feeling of tightness in the area. This will alleviate your discomfort and make it easier for you to move and exercise.

Common areas that have trigger points include:

- Muscles in the buttocks.
- Muscles in the upper back.
- Muscles in the lower back.

Common causes of trigger points are:

- An injury.
- Strain from everyday activities.
- Body mechanics or the way you move.
- Certain activities

Before getting a trigger point injection, tell your doctor if you have:

- An allergy to latex, steroids, or lidocaine.
- Are taking aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Motrin[®], Aleve[®] or any other drugs that prevent blood clotting including: Coumadin[®], Plavix[®] Heparin
- An infection near the area where the shot will be given.

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DISCLAIMER: INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS SHEET IS GENERAL IN CONTENT AND SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE. CONCERNS OVER MEDICAL CONDITIONS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN OR PAIN CARE SPECIALIST.

How It Is Given:

A trigger point injection is quick and simple. First, you will sign a consent form. Your doctor will find the trigger point by feeling around the area that hurts. He or she will clean and mark your skin where the shot will be given. A small amount of the pain reliever will be injected into the area. You should only feel some pinching as the needle is injected. The doctor may massage the area to help the medicine disperse into the entire area around the trigger point.

Special Points:

- You should not feel more pain after getting a trigger point injection.
- Your doctor may refer you to an occupational or physical therapist. The therapist will show you how to do exercises that can reduce strain. He or she may also suggest that you use an assistive device to help limit stress in the problem area and make it easier to perform a task. Assistive devices can include a:
 - Cane
 - Walker
 - Splint
 - Brace
 - Cervical collar
 - Raised toilet seat

The therapist will show you how to use the device correctly.

- You should rest the area for a day or two after the shot. Avoid activities that may cause strain such as:
 - Standing for long periods of time
 - Jogging
 - Lifting heavy objects

Call Your Doctor or Nurse If You:

- Develop a fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher.
- Have increased:
 - Pain
 - Swelling
 - Tenderness
- Develop:
 - A skin irritation
 - Increased redness
 - Warmth, burning, or itching around the injection site
- Develop any new or unexplained symptoms.
- Have any questions or concerns.