

More about Regenerative Injection Therapies

What are trigger points?

Trigger points are sensitive areas in muscles which are very responsive to touch. Compression at these points can send pain to other areas of the body. For example, a trigger point in the neck may produce pain in the back, shoulder, or arm, but not in the neck. This pain usually comes from the trigger points in muscle groups and not from the nerves in the body. Trigger points can:

- Cause muscle spasm
- Limit your arm and leg movement
- Decrease strength

Will the injection help my pain

It is hard to say for sure if the injection will help you. Your pain may go away after the injection and never come back. Sometimes the injection only helps to lessen the pain for a short time. In this case, a second injection may be helpful. If the second injection does not help, then TPI will most likely not help with your pain for the long-term. A TPI may make it easier for you to exercise and to participate in physical therapy sessions to help improve your condition overall. It is important for you to take an active role in your treatment plan.

How is a TPI done?

The procedure may include:

- Injecting the skin with a local anesthetic. You may feel a stinging and a burning sensation.
- Trigger point injection. When the tip of the needle touches the trigger point, you may feel a brief increase in your pain. This pain is a good sign that the medicine is in the correct spot. The pain usually goes away quickly. The actual time it takes for your doctor to complete the procedure may be different for each patient.

What is a trigger point injection (TPI)?

A TPI is an injection that will help diagnose and treat certain chronic pain conditions where muscle sensitivity and pain exist.

How long will the pain relief last?

The length of pain relief varies from person to person. In most cases, the pain may be lessened for a few days and up to a few months. Your doctor may recommend TPI's as well as other types of pain management as part of your treatment.

When can I go back to my normal activities?

Limit activities as much as possible the day of the injection. The following day you can resume your normal activities, including your muscle stretching exercises as directed by your doctor.

Are there any side effects?

Yes, the TPI's can cause some side effects, including:

- Soreness in the injection area for several days
- Bruising in the area of injection
- Muscle stiffness due to muscle spasm

If this is a problem, you might try acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or aspirin. Also, try applying a cold pack. If cold doesn't help, try warm, moist heat, and then gently stretch the muscle in the affected area to relieve muscle stiffness.

Is TPI safe?

Yes, however there are risks and side effects. More serious complications are possible for some people.

- Very rarely, if the injection is done in the chest wall or low in the neck, the needle may puncture the lung. This would cause chest pain and difficulty breathing
- The needle may hit a nerve that could cause pain.

Talk with your doctor to weigh the risks and benefits of having the injection.

How often can I have trigger point injections?

You'll want to discuss your treatment plan with your doctor. Sometimes your doctor will prescribe a series of injections. These injections are done several weeks apart. After this series, your doctor can determine how the injections are helping you. If the second or third injections does not help, then TPI's most likely will not help with your pain.

What do I do if the TPI does not work for my pain or I don't want one?

Trigger points can cause a cycle of discomfort, inactivity, and disability. The good news is that there are many things you can do to manage your chronic pain. Using several methods together is often the most helpful approach. Studies have shown that strategies such as exercise, relaxation, and changing negative thought patterns can help people with chronic pain.

Who should not have trigger point injections

- Anyone who is thinking of becoming pregnant, currently pregnant or breastfeeding.
- People with a severe allergic reaction to local anesthetics.
- Anyone taking blood thinning medicine like coumadin (Warfarin), clopidogrel (plavix), aspirin, dipyridamole (Agrrenox), Enoxaparin (Lovenox), Foundaparinux (Arixtra), or heparin. These medications need to be discontinued before the procedure. Discuss this with your doctor or cardiologist to weigh the risks and benefits of stopping these medicines. It is OK to take Tylenol for other pain like arthritis, pain from previous operations, abdominal pain, and headaches.

You should discuss any questions regarding the use of any other medications with your doctor.

Call A Natural Path Integrated Health Care after the trigger point injection if you experience:

- Redness, pus, or swelling at the injections site
- Persistent numbness, "pins and needles," or weakness that develops after you leave the clinic
- Any difficulty breathing

Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room any time you think you may need emergency care. For example, if:

- Breathing is very difficult
- After the injection you develop any new numbness or weakness in your hands or legs, or if you are unable to control your bladder or bowels.