



Trigger Point Injections (TPIs)

What is a Trigger Point Injection (TPI)?

A TPI is an injection of anesthetic medication into an area of muscle called a trigger point.

What is a Trigger Point?

A trigger point is an area of localized muscle spasm or pain. Such painful areas can be caused from muscle damage or from damage to nearby ligaments or joints.

Who can benefit from TPIs?

Patients with neck pain, back pain, buttock pain or hip pain can benefit from TPIs. Patients with continued back pain after surgery may also benefit from trigger point injections.

How do TPIs help?

By blocking the painful signals from the muscle, TPIs can help by allowing patients to stretch the affected muscle with less pain. Blood flow to the area may also be increased thus promoting tissue healing. A mixture of numbing medicine sometimes combined with steroids is used for the injection. Steroids are potent anti-inflammatory agents. The injections can therefore decrease swelling and pain.

Because the medications are delivered to the site of pain, smaller doses can be given, generally with more relief than medicines given by mouth.

How often can these injections be given?

Your doctor will determine how many injections should be given, however, 5 to 6 injections can usually be given per year. Your relief from each injection will determine how many injections can be given.

What are the possible side effects?

As with any procedure, a small number of patients may experience side effects which will be explained in more detail by your doctor. A few potential side effects are listed below, however, the vast majority of patients experience no side effects at all.

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Nerve damage
- Lack of relief
- Localized pain at the injection site

What if I am a diabetic?

Your blood sugars may be increased for a few days following the injection and

may require closer monitoring.

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid, Aggrenox):

Coumadin must be stopped 5 days before your procedure and you must have some laboratory studies taken immediately before your procedure (Eg., PT, INR). Your doctor may ask you to stop other medications before your procedure as well.

Does the injection hurt?

The area is numbed with local anesthetic before the injection, thus most patients experience only moderate discomfort.

Will I have any restrictions?

You should take it easy on the day of an injection. Otherwise no restrictions are present.