

Trigger Point Injection – Information for Patients

What is a trigger point?

A trigger point is a sensitive or irritable spot in the body that can be a source of pain conditions. A trigger point is felt as a knot or tight, ropy band of muscle that forms when muscle fails to relax.

What are trigger point injections?

Trigger Point Injections are courses of 2 or 3 injections given in and around the painful area in the muscle. Local anaesthetic with or without anti-inflammatory cortisone is injected. These injections should ideally be done in conjunction with physiotherapy or stretching exercises to prevent the recurrence of the spasm.

Do I need any special preparation?

For this procedure, you will be admitted for approximately 1-2 hours. You may eat or drink and take your normal medication before your treatment. Patients taking warfarin will be given special instructions. Depending on the site of injection you may either wear your own clothes or a hospital gown.

What does the actual procedure involve?

The area will be cleaned with cold antiseptic solution. The local anaesthetic with or without steroids will be injected in the affected muscle with a fine needle. Often more than one spot is injected. It only takes about 5-10 minutes to do the injections. You will then rest for about 20-30 minutes, after which you will be sent home. The procedure may be repeated 2 to 3 times, at intervals of 1 to 6 weeks, depending on how effective the pain relief has been.

What complications can occur?

Numbness from the anaesthetic may last about an hour. A bruise may form at the injection site. There is a small risk of infection. Soreness around area of injection could last for 1 or 2 days.

Will it work?

Trigger point injections can be very effective but it does not work for everyone. They are easily performed and are worth trying.