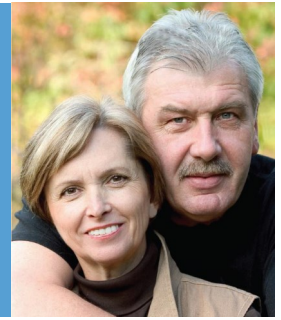


## Pain Medicine Program

# Trigger Point Injections



### **What are Trigger Points?**

Trigger points are commonly defined areas of tense muscles or knots in the muscle, which can be painful. Often these trigger points can cause localized pain or even referred pain to other parts of the body which can mimic conditions such as a pinch nerve in your neck or back. They can occur from direct muscle injuries, poor posture, and repetitive strain or secondarily from spine conditions such as a herniated disc. Although most of the time they respond to conservative measures such as massage, muscle relaxants and physical therapy, sometimes trigger point injections are required.

### **What are Trigger Point Injections?**

Trigger point injections are specific types of local muscle injections used to treat areas responsible for pain and spasms. Common medications used in trigger point injections include local anesthetic (numbing medicine) and/or steroidal/non-steroidal (anti-inflammatory) medications. The purpose of the injections is not only to decrease pain, but also to improve function and break the pain cycle.

### **How is it done?**

A small needle is inserted into the trigger point areas identified and the medication is injected. The medication injected will cause the trigger point to relax and reduce the pain.

### **Possible complications?**

Complications are extremely rare. There may be slight pain, swelling and/or bruising to the area where the injection is given. There is a very slight risk of infection, bleeding, or worsening of symptoms.

### **What can I expect after the injection?**

After the injection, you may feel soreness in the area injected. As the numbing medication used in the injection wears off you may have pain for 2-3 days. During the first 24 hours, apply ice to the injected area for 15-20 minutes, three times a day. If pain persists, over the counter pain relievers may be helpful. You may be instructed in some stretching exercises or physical therapy. The duration of pain relief is different for each patient. For some, the relief lasts several months or longer. If the treatment works for you, repeat injections may be offered as a recommended by your provider.

### **When can I resume my normal activities?**

You can continue your regular diet and medications after discharge. If you receive sedation you may not drive or operate heavy machinery for 12 hours. Avoid any strenuous activity for 24 hours. You can return to your normal activities the next day. If you have questions or concerns about what to do for the 24-48 hours after your procedure, please ask the nurse for clarification.