

# Trigger Point Injections for Chronic Pain Management

Chronic Pain Management Service

## What is a Trigger Point?

A trigger point is a tender point in a muscle which when pressed causes pain. In its active state, a normal muscle is supposed to contract and relax. A trigger point is formed when the muscle fails to relax and a knot or tight ropey band of muscle is formed. The trigger point can trap or irritate the surrounding nerves and cause pain to be felt in another part of the body.

## What is a Trigger Point Injection?

Your physician has recommended that you receive a Trigger Point Injection, which is anaesthetic medication. When injected into the area that is painful (Trigger Point), it may relieve the pain that often accompanies a back or neck disorder.

## Consent

We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. Your doctor will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure or treatment proposed please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

## What are the benefits?

- To alleviate pain

## Are there any side effects / risks to this procedure?

- Unfortunately, no procedure is risk free
- Although long term side effects and complications are uncommon, they can occur
- Infection is a theoretical risk but very rare
- In some cases where a muscle near the ribcage is injected there is a risk of puncturing causing a collapsed lung, but again this is very rare
- You may have mild local tenderness and bruising at the site of the injection(s), which will usually settle over the next few days
- Steroids may cause short term facial flushing and fluid retention with weight gain. Steroids may affect the menstrual cycle for 1-2 cycles

**The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.**

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

## Are there any alternatives?

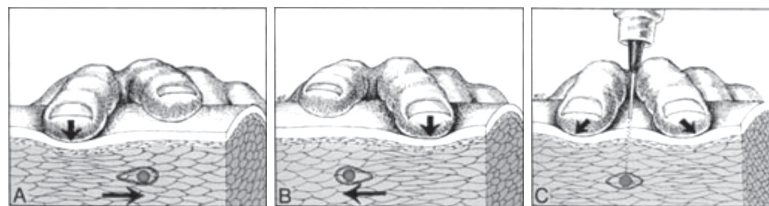
Alternatives to a Trigger Point injection can be discussed with your Consultant.

## What happens before the procedure?

- You will have your treatment as an outpatient at The Appleby Suite, New Cross Hospital. This will be confirmed beforehand at your clinic appointment
- You will be sent a letter confirming the date and time of your appointment. It will be a morning or an afternoon appointment. You will be informed if you need to stop any medications
- Your stay may be between two to four hours so please bring something with you to read or do to keep yourself occupied. Before any treatment begins you will be asked to provide assurance that someone is able to drive you home
- You will be asked to change into a theatre gown and your blood pressure and pulse will be recorded. Your consultant will then discuss the procedure with you and ask you to sign a consent form

## What happens during the procedure?

- In the treatment room, you may have a small needle (cannula) placed in the back of your hand. This allows the doctor to give you medication if necessary
- Once you are lying in the correct position, the consultant will clean the area where you have painful muscle trigger points with an antiseptic solution which can feel very cold
- The consultant will then lightly press on the area of painful muscle to identify where the specific trigger points are. An ultrasound may be used to help locate the site
- Local anaesthetic and sometimes an anti-inflammatory steroid is then injected into these trigger points which may briefly cause some discomfort but the area will soon go numb



## What happens after the procedure?

- You will be taken to the recovery area where the nursing staff will observe you
- You may feel a little drowsy and wish to sleep
- We will offer you some light refreshment
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked frequently
- Before you leave, the consultant will see you again and ask a few questions about your pain and any effects that the injection may have had
- You will be sent a follow-up review appointment through the post

Please ensure that you have arranged for someone to drive you home after this procedure. Failure to do so will result in your procedure being cancelled. If you have had sedation, we recommend that you arrange for someone to stay with you overnight and that you do not drive for 24 hours.

## What should I expect afterwards?

- Some rapid relief of your pain may be noticed due to the local anaesthetic. It could take several days before the steroid becomes effective
- These injections will not work in all patients
- Take your regular pain relief as normal
- If this injection relieves your pain, please remember that it is not a cure. Do not do strenuous

activities immediately, but build up your activity level slowly

- Simple activities like a daily walk or swimming will help to improve your muscle tone. The best way is to increase your activity slowly
- If you have been allocated Physiotherapy sessions, please continue to attend for these

## What are the follow-up arrangements?

A letter will be sent to your GP with details about your injection. You will receive an appointment for a review consultation with one of the Pain Management nurses. This appointment will take place approximately three months after your injection. It would be helpful if you kept a diary of your experiences following the injection.

## What to remember for your follow-up appointment?

- Please bring your glasses if you need them for reading
- Always bring a list of all current medications
- Continue taking all your usual medication on treatment day, unless you have been contacted and advised otherwise
- If there is any possibility you may be pregnant please inform the doctor or nurse

## Additional information

For further information about chronic pain conditions and treatments you may wish to search the following website:

**The British Pain Society available at:**  
[www.britishpainsociety.org.uk](http://www.britishpainsociety.org.uk)

If you require any further information or have any further queries, please discuss this with your consultant before starting the treatment.

**Pain Management Helpline:**  
(01902) 695122

Monday - Friday 8am until 4pm

## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。