

EMORY PAIN CENTER

Trigger Point Injections

What are trigger points? Trigger points are tight knots or bands of muscle fibers that can form in muscles throughout the body. They are often tender to the touch and can cause localized or referred pain, muscle stiffness, and restricted range of motion. Trigger points can develop from muscle overuse, injury, poor posture, or stress.

What are trigger point injections? Trigger point injections are a common treatment option for relieving pain and discomfort associated with trigger points. During the procedure, a small needle is inserted into the trigger point, and a local anesthetic, such as lidocaine, or a combination of anesthetic and a corticosteroid medication is injected. The injection helps to relax the muscle, relieve pain, and improve blood flow to the area.

What are the indications for trigger point injections? Trigger point injections are used to treat various conditions, including muscle pain, tension headaches, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain syndrome, and chronic pain syndromes. They can be particularly beneficial for individuals who have not experienced significant relief from other conservative treatments, such as physical therapy, stretching exercises, or oral medications.

How is a trigger point injection performed? Before the procedure, the skin around the trigger point will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. The healthcare provider will then locate the trigger point by palpating the area and may use ultrasound or other imaging techniques for precise localization. Once the trigger point is identified, the needle will be inserted, and the medication will be injected into the trigger point. The injection may cause temporary discomfort or a sensation of pressure. The procedure usually takes a few minutes per trigger point, and multiple trigger points can be treated during a single session.

What are the side effects/risks of trigger point injections? Trigger point injections are generally safe, but like any medical procedure, they carry some risks. Common side effects may include temporary soreness or bruising at the injection site. In rare cases, infection, bleeding, nerve damage, or allergic reactions to the medication may occur. It is important to discuss any concerns or potential complications with your healthcare provider before the procedure.

How effective are trigger point injections? The effectiveness of trigger point injections can vary depending on the individual and the specific condition being treated. For many patients, trigger point injections provide significant relief from muscle pain, improve mobility, and allow them to engage in physical therapy or other rehabilitative exercises. Multiple injections may be needed, depending on the number and severity of trigger points. It is important to discuss your expectations and goals with your healthcare provider to determine if trigger point injections are an appropriate treatment option for you.