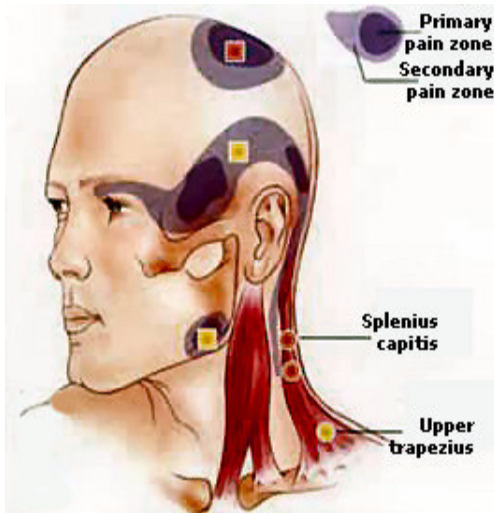


TRIGGER POINT INJECTIONS

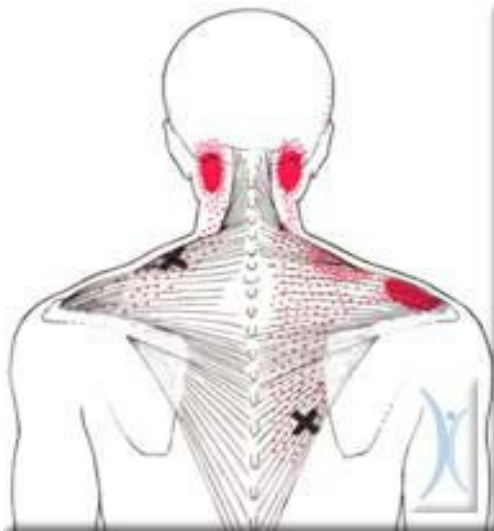
For Neck, Shoulder, Upper Back and Headache pain



A trigger point injection is an outpatient procedure for diagnosing and treating head, neck, shoulder, upper back, and arm pain.

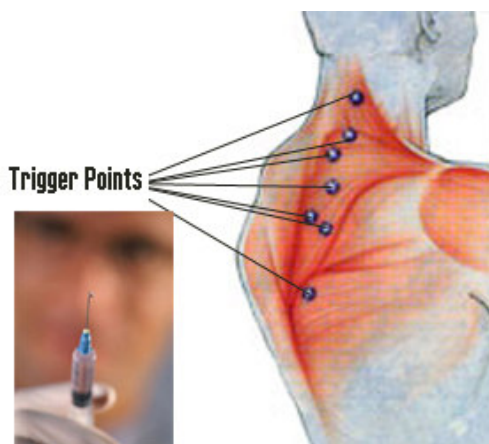
What is a trigger point?

Myofascial trigger points are felt to be hyperirritable foci in muscles and fascia associated with taut muscle bands. Trigger points are diagnosed by palpation and produce a local twitch response and a referred pain pattern distal to the site of muscle irritability. Trigger points cannot be properly diagnosed in the acute stages of neck or back pain when muscle spasm and inflammation are present. Initially, trigger points generally respond to a program of stretching and correction of poor postural mechanics with or without other modalities, such as superficial heat or cold. Trigger point injections should be reserved for patients who have not responded in the first four to six weeks to a properly directed rehabilitation program and appropriate pharmacologic intervention.



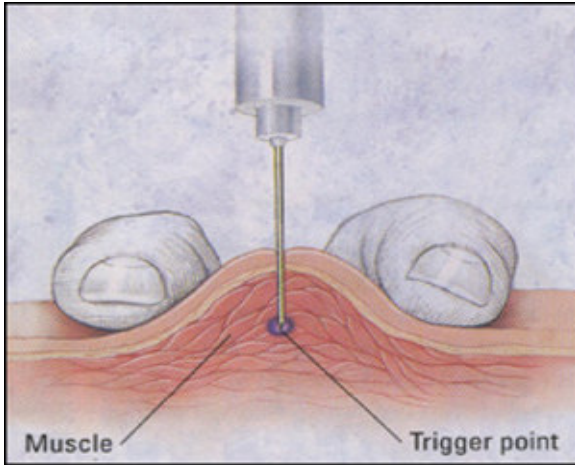
What is a trigger point injection and why is it helpful?

The trigger point injection into the trigger point of the injured muscle. This allows for relaxation of the muscle and improved healing. These injections are an adjunct treatment, which facilitates participation in an active exercise program and may assist in avoiding the need for surgical intervention.



What happens during the procedure?

A small needle is inserted into the trigger point and a local anesthetic (e.g., lidocaine, procaine) with or without a corticosteroid is injected. Saline solution can also be injected. Injection of medication inactivates the trigger point and thus alleviates pain. Sustained relief usually is achieved with a brief course of treatment. The injection may cause a twitch or pain that lasts a few seconds to a few minutes.



What happens after the procedure?

Patients are then returned to the recovery area where they are monitored for 30-60 minutes. Patients are then asked to record the relief they experience during the next week on a post injection evaluation sheet. Numbness from the anesthetic may last about an hour and a bruise may form at the injection site. Pain can be relieved by alternately applying moist heat followed by ice for a day or two. In most cases, stretching exercises and physical therapy are performed following TPI. A follow-up appointment will be made for a repeat block if indicated.