PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Trigger Point Injections

This information will help you prepare for your trigger point injection (shot).

About Trigger Points

A trigger point is a knot in your muscle that doesn’t relax and is very sensitive to touch. Trigger points can also cause muscle spasms (twitches) or a feeling of tightness. When pressure is applied to the trigger point, you will feel some pain in that area. You may also feel some pain in another part of your body. This is called the target zone.

Common areas that have trigger points are the muscles in your:

- Buttocks
- Upper back
- Lower back
- Neck

Common causes of trigger points are:

- An injury
- Strain from everyday activities
- The way that you move (body mechanics)

About Trigger Point Shots

A trigger point shot is used to treat a trigger point in your muscle. The numbing medication in a trigger point shot can help relieve some of your pain. The act of inserting the needle into your muscle may also help break up the knot and relieve spasms and the feeling of tightness. This will make you feel better and make it easier for you to move and exercise.
Before getting a trigger point shot, tell your doctor if you:

- Have an allergy to latex or lidocaine.
- Have an infection near the area where the shot will be given.
- Take a blood thinner medication (medication that affects the way your blood clots). Some examples of these medications are:

| • aspirin            | • tinzaparin (Innohep®) |
|• clopidogrel (Plavix®) | • warfarin (Coumadin®)  |
|• heparin             |

### Getting a Trigger Point Shot

A trigger point shot is quick and simple. Your doctor will find the trigger point by feeling around the area that hurts. Once they have found the trigger point, your doctor will clean and mark your skin where the shot will be given.

Then, your doctor will inject a small amount of numbing medication into the trigger point. You should only feel some pinching as the needle is put through your skin. Your doctor may massage the area to help the medication get into the entire area around the trigger point.

### After Your Trigger Point Shot

- Your pain should get better after getting a trigger point shot.
- Your doctor may recommend that you see an occupational or physical therapist. The therapist will show you how to do exercises that can reduce muscle strain.
- Your doctor may also suggest that you use an assistive device to keep you from straining the muscles in the area with the trigger point. It may also make it easier for you to perform tasks. If you have an assistive device, your physical or occupational therapist will show you how to use it correctly. Some examples of assistive devices are:

| • A cane      | • A brace    |
|• A walker    | • A cervical collar |
|• A splint    | • A raised toilet seat |
You should rest the area for 1 to 2 days after the shot. Avoid activities that may cause strain, such as:

- Standing for long periods of time
- Jogging and other strenuous exercises
- Lifting heavy objects

Don’t use heating pads or warm packs for 1 to 2 days after the shot. The increased heat can cause bleeding.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse if You

- Have a temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Have any of the following around the area where you got the shot:
  - Increased pain, swelling, tenderness, or redness
  - Skin irritation
  - Warmth, burning, or itching
- Develop any new or unexplained symptoms
- Have any questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at _____________________. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call____________________. If there’s no number listed, or you’re not sure, call 212-639-2000.