

## Myofascial Trigger Point Injections PATIENT EDUCATION SHEET

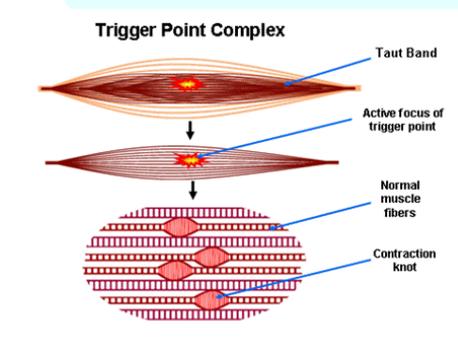
### Myofascial Trigger Points

Normal muscles are made up of different types of muscle fibers and components which are intricately assembled to allow the muscle to contract and do its job. When there is an injury either to the muscle or somewhere else in the body (e.g., spine or joint), the muscle affected or the muscle nearby will have to react to the injury. It does this by contracting. This is a normal protective mechanism built-in to all of our muscles. In many cases these contractions are sustained and cause the muscle to work overtime. This is also normal. Furthermore, these muscles may develop chronically tightened areas of muscle fibers which form into a 'knot.' These become known as trigger points and are also normal because they are "latent." When this knotted area of muscle becomes painful, they become "active" trigger points—this is not normal and should be treated.

So a trigger point is a localized, irritable, taut band of muscle that has become a source of considerable pain because it will not relax. When a trigger point is pressed, it will feel sore in the area and can also refer pain over to another part of the body. Trigger points can develop as a result of:

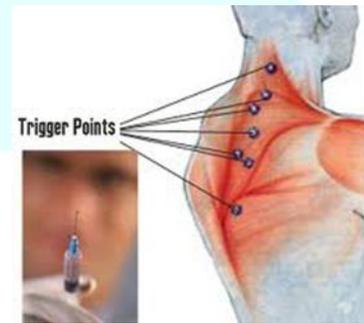
- ✓ Traumatic injury to the muscle
- ✓ Strain due to repetitive use
- ✓ Poor posture
- ✓ Spine conditions (herniated discs)

Trigger points will eventually affect mobility and posture and will compromise normal movement patterns, leading to soft tissue dysfunction as well as more trigger points, intensifying the pain pattern and dysfunction, and causing a chronic painful condition.



### Trigger Point Injections

Injecting a trigger point with anesthetic, saline or a corticosteroid can relax the muscle and help to eliminate the trigger point. Relaxing the muscle improves blood flow and healing. Without the injection, a trigger point can lead to the development of other trigger points.



#### **What is the procedure like?**

We will insert a small needle into your trigger point that will deliver a local anesthetic. You may feel a sharp pain during the injection and you may also feel the muscle jump or "grab." We can alleviate this somewhat by spraying a cold solution onto the skin immediately prior to the injection. After the needle is inserted, the needle is used to break up the knotted muscle fibers forming the trigger point. This process is known as "needling" and can be uncomfortable but is proven to greatly enhance the success of the injection. After a few seconds of needling, the trigger point is injected and the needle is removed. Usually, right after the trigger point is injected there is a significant decrease in pain and often less stiffness in the muscles. Several trigger points in one area can be injected in one visit, up to a maximum of 12.

You may experience some numbness over the pattern of referral of the muscle injected for about an hour after the injection. There may be some stiffness and soreness, which should not last longer than 1 or 2 days. Within three to five (3 to 5) days you should experience a decrease in pain.



*Trigger points may also be treated with oral and topical medications, muscle stimulation units as well as physical (manual) therapy, massage therapy and chiropractic treatments.*