Trigger point injection

This leaflet explains what a trigger point injection is and outlines the risks and benefits of using this treatment to reduce pain and improve movement.

What is a trigger point injection?

A trigger point is a tender area of your body, often a muscle, which when pressed, causes pain. Normal muscle contracts and relaxes. The muscle may fail to relax and a knot or tight band of muscle is formed, this is called a trigger point.

Trigger point injections usually contain local anaesthetic and a small amount of steroid. It is used in an attempt to reduce this pain. The steroid that we use is not licensed by the Medicines Control Agency for this procedure, but it has been used without any problems in millions of patients worldwide and still ~~is~~ routinely used for this purpose in many UK hospitals.

Why am I having this procedure?

Injecting local anaesthetic and steroid anti-inflammatory can help decrease swelling and inflammation which may allow muscle to relax. This may help reduce your pain and abnormal sensations and help to improve mobility.

Are there any risks?

- The procedure may fail to provide you with the expected relief.
- There may be some tenderness or bruising at the injection site that should settle after the first few days.
- Other risks are rarer and may include infection, bleeding, temporary worsening of pain, nerve damage and toxicity from the local anaesthetic.

What will happen between now and the injection?

The doctor may have prescribed some painkillers for you to take and unless they are giving you side effects or not helping, you should continue to take them as advised.

What will happen on the day of the injection?

The doctor will explain the procedure to you and offer you the chance to ask questions before you sign a consent form.

The injection site will be cleaned with antiseptic solution and some local anaesthetic will be injected into your skin. This will sting briefly. You may feel a pushing sensation as the needle is put into the right place. The medication will be injected and the needle will be removed. You will be asked to wait in the waiting room for 10-15 minutes before being able to go home.

How will I feel afterwards?

The injection site may feel uncomfortable and sore. This is nothing to worry about, as it should settle. On rare occasions, you may feel some dizziness or be light headed when sitting/standing. If you get any pain over the first few days, continue to take your painkillers.

Important things to remember

- You will need to bring a responsible adult to accompany you home.
- Please bring your regular painkillers with you.
- If you have any enquiries, please contact the Pain Management Unit at least 48 hours in advance.

Can I drive afterwards?

You should not drive for 24 hours after the injection, as your insurance may be void if you are in an accident.

When can I shower / bathe?

Usually the day after the procedure.

When can I return to normal activity?

We advise you to take it easy for the first 24 hours, but after this time to return to normal activity. It is best to slowly start to increase your exercise as the pain decreases. Do not overdo it as this may increase the pain, but a slow buildup of activity is advised.

Any queries?

If you have any queries or concerns regarding this treatment, please contact:

During working hours: Pain Management Unit 0118 322 8261.

Out of hours / weekends: please contact your GP or the out of hours' service for advice.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Pain Management Unit
Reviewed: November 2026.
Next review due: November 2028.