**INFORMATION ON TRIGGER POINT INJECTIONS**

**Trigger Point Injections**

Trigger point injections help release the shortened muscle bands and fascial tissue that surrounds muscle caused by a dysfunctional nervous system from trauma, age and stress. The symptoms of pain, tightness, associated weakness, reduced range of motion and mobility, numbness, pins and needles, and cold sensations can be explained by the effects of your dysfunctional small nerves in your tissues. Trigger point injections use sterile needles with the local anesthetic lidocaine to release the muscle bands and tightened fascia so relaxing the tissues allowing more blood supply with oxygen and nutrients to these small peripheral nerves. On average , over 4-6 weekly treatment sessions most patients find an optimal response including reduced pain, tightness, improved range of motion and mobility, reduced numbness and pins and needles (if applicable) with improved function and quality of life. Most patients do not require regular follow up appointments.

**Side Effects**

The *common minor side effects* include tolerable pain from the injection penetrating the skin and muscle band, grinding sensation from the penetration of the thickened fascia, bleeding from the injections sites which stops in a few minutes, bruising, increased soreness or aggravation of symptoms for a few hours to days which is minimized by applying heat regularly and resting.

The *rare minor side effects* include paresthesia (prickling sensation from inadvertently penetrating a nerve), nausea, muscle spasm with bending of the needle, and potentially a bacterial skin infection. Lightheadedness and unsteadiness on your feet occurs infrequently and resolves in a few minutes.

The *very rare major side effects* may include perforation of an organ (lung, bladder, bowel) or spinal cord (limb numbness, weakness, loss of bladder and bowel function). Perforation of the lung results in shortness of breath and chest pain, if these symptoms come on after treatment, please attend the local ER department by ambulance for treatment as this condition is readily treatable. Spinal cord injury results in stroke like symptoms that may be permanent. Safety measures are taken at every treatment session to avoid these preventable outcomes.

The *immediate positive side effects* may include pain relief, feeling looser in the tight areas, energized and an emotional release with tears and laughter.

The *long term positive benefits* include pain reduction, increased range of motion, improved quality of life and for some a cure for their suffering.

**What to Expect**

The first visit is to review the history of complaints, perform an examination and explain why the treatment works with review of any questions. Treatment may start on the first visit dependant on the doctor’s preference or time schedule. Weekly treatments are for 4-6 sessions in most cases. Follow up treatments can be arranged if needed.

**Conditions**

Inform your doctor if you are pregnant**, have a pacemaker, hepatitis, HIV, hemophilia or bleeding disorders or take blood thinners like Aspirin, Warfarin or the newer blood thinners**. Trigger point injections are **not recommended** if you are **pregnant or on Warfarin or other similar blood thinners**.

**Advice for Treatments**

***Before Treatments*** – have a light meal, no smoking 1 hour before, no alcohol 4 hours before, take your normal pain medications and regular medication by your doctor; be well rested. **Wear dark clothing**.

***After treatments*** – rest for 2-3 days if possible to allow the body to recover. **Postpone your regular exercise routine** for **FOUR** weeks and you can slowly introduce walking and simple exercise as the treatments progress dependent on your response. Once you have a **GOOD response** regular exercise can restart slowly. Apply **heat** to the sore areas for pain relief. Take regular pain medications for pain relief. No alcohol or coffee for 2 hours after.