

## **Trigger finger injection**

Your GP has diagnosed you with trigger finger and after discussion you have decided a steroid injection may be beneficial. In many cases this is the only treatment you will need since the success rate is high (around 80%). This treatment works in about 8 in 10 cases. A second injection after 3 months may be needed if the first does not work.

### **What is involved?**

The doctor will examine your hand and mark the position of the injection. After cleaning the hand the doctor will use a needle to inject a mixture of steroid and local anaesthetic through the skin. This may sting slightly or be uncomfortable. A small dressing may be applied.

### **What can I expect following my injection?**

Your hand will be uncomfortable after the local anaesthetic wears off and you may need to take pain medication such as paracetamol to relieve the discomfort. It is fairly common to experience pain during the first couple of days, but this should settle down after a few days.

### **Is there anything I can do to help my recovery?**

It is important to move your wrist, fingers and thumb regularly after your injection even if they feel stiff. Your hand may become swollen so it is important to keep it elevated above your heart whenever possible for the first couple of days. This will reduce the swelling and will also help to reduce any pain. You can elevate your hand by using a sling or by sitting with pillows or cushions so that your hand is level with your shoulder. You can also lie with your hand across your chest on a pillow or cushion.

### **What should I look out for after my injection?**

Please contact the surgery if you experience:

- Severe bruising and swelling
- Any signs of infection such as your finger or thumb becoming red, hot and swollen

If you develop an infection you may need treatment with antibiotics.

Outside of working hours you should seek medical attention via ringing 111 or attending the walk-in-centre.

### **Will I need to be off work?**

It is unusual for this type of treatment to lead to time off work but if your symptoms deteriorate following your steroid injection you may need to take some time to rest whilst it recovers. You can self-certify for sickness absence for up to 5 days. After that your GP can provide a certificate for you in the unlikely situation that you need a longer period off work.

### **When can I return to normal activities?**

Your hand can be used for light activities immediately after the injection. You can build up to normal activities over the next few days.

### **Can I drive after my injection?**

There is not usually any problem driving straight after the injection. If you are in pain afterwards it is advisable to wait until you are more comfortable. If you have any doubts you must check with your car insurance provider.

### **What can I expect over the next few months?**

- About two thirds of patients with triggering are successfully treated with one injection.
- Up to two injections can be given in one course of treatment.
- Nine out of ten patients can be successfully treated with only injections.
- If the injections are not successful then surgery can be considered.

If you continue to have problems with your hand please see your GP who can arrange for further treatment or for a referral to a hand surgeon.