

If there is a chance your child may be pregnant, please tell us before dry needling.

What is dry needling?

Dry needling is when a trained provider puts a thin, solid needle into the skin, muscles and connective tissues.

Dry needling:

- Helps with pain and movement problems.
- Reduces trigger points. Trigger points are tight bands of muscle that can cause pain.
- Helps break up trigger points and scar tissue to improve pain and range of motion. This improves your child's activity in sports, hobbies and daily life.
- Is done as part of your child's plan of care. The plan of care includes exercise therapy and other forms of treatment.



Is dry needling like acupuncture?

Dry needling and acupuncture both use a thin needle as their main tool. Otherwise, they are very different.

Physical therapists use dry needling to treat musculoskeletal (muscle, tendon and myofascial) injuries. Dry needling is based on western anatomy and modern science.

Acupuncturists use acupuncture to change the flow of electricity in the body which can affect different organs. Acupuncture is based on Chinese medicine.

What happens during dry needling?

- Dry needling is a different experience for each person.
- It does NOT feel like getting a shot or having your blood drawn.
- Many people do not feel the needle going into the skin.
- You may feel a muscle twitch, muscle ache, muscle tightness or soreness.
- Soreness should not last more than 24 to 48 hours.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Dry needling, continued

What should I expect after dry needling?

- Bruising may happen. This is normal.
- The needle may leave a raised red or black dot on your child's skin. This is normal.
- Your child may need more than 1 dry needling treatment. Your child's physical therapist will decide how many treatments your child needs. This is based on your child's diagnosis and how they respond to the treatment.

What should my child do after dry needling?

- Give your child more water than normal for 24 hours after dry needling. This helps with soreness.
- They may use heat, ice or massage to help with soreness.
- Your child may do their normal daily activities and their normal exercise routine.
- Have your child stretch.
- Avoid high impact activities. For example: avoid contact at practice and activities that require quick resisted movement.
- Avoid very hard workouts.

Are there any risks?

Some possible risks include:

- Pneumothorax if the lung is punctured (stuck) by accident. This is very uncommon. Our providers are specially trained, but if this happens:
 - Your child may need a chest X-ray and further treatment.
 - Your child may be short of breath. This may last several days to weeks.
 - Your child may need to go to the hospital for a more serious puncture. Doctors may need to reinflate the lung.
- Allergic reaction if your child has a nickel allergy
- Bleeding at times
- Fainting
- Anxiety

Please let us know if your child is at risk for any of these before they get dry needling.

Take your child to the closest emergency department (ED) or urgent care center if your child has any of these:

- Trouble breathing
- Shortness of breath that gets worse

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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