

Phenol for Spastic Muscles

What is phenol and how does it work?

Phenol [FEE-noll] is a medicine that loosens muscles so they are not too tight. It is a temporary treatment for spastic muscles. Spastic or tight muscles are caused by nerves that send the wrong message or too many messages to the muscles. Phenol helps reduce the number of messages sent to the muscles, making them less tight. It is usually used to help loosen larger muscles, such as the thigh muscle.

Phenol is usually injected into the muscle with a small needle. It works right away and may last as long as 6 months. The medicine works best if your child also has other treatments, such as stretching, braces, splints, casts, or special positioning.

What are the benefits and risks of phenol injections?

Benefits

Loosening spastic muscles with phenol can make your child more comfortable and help their muscles move better. It can also make it easier to dress, bathe, and take care of them.

Risks

Phenol is low risk. Common side effects include:

- A little pain or swelling at the injection site
- Bleeding
- Bruising
- A small muscle knot in the muscle
- Infection

Uncommon or rare complications include nerve pain at the injection site. This may feel like tingling, burning, or numbness. If this happens, the discomfort may last longer. Ask your child's healthcare provider about medicine that can treat this discomfort.



How will my child receive phenol?

Using a small machine and needles, your child's healthcare provider will inject the phenol where the nerve enters the muscle. The machine tells the muscle to move. This helps the provider find the exact spot to put the phenol. They often put the phenol in a few spots in each muscle.

Phenol injections can hurt. To help reduce discomfort, a numbing medicine called bupivacaine [byoo-PIV-uh-kane] is used to help with pain.

It is usually easier for your child to be asleep during the procedure. They may be given sedation medicine to help them sleep. If your child receives sedation, the procedure will take place in the Children's Procedure Center (CPC).

A CPC staff member will call you the afternoon before the procedure. They will tell when your child should stop eating and drinking before the procedure.

After sedation, your child may feel drowsy for a while. The CPC staff will watch your child carefully until they are awake and ready to go home.

How do I care for my child after a phenol injection?

Your child might have some pain after getting phenol. Here are some things that can help:

- Tylenol (acetaminophen), Motrin or Advil (ibuprofen) can help with pain
- Place ice packs or warm packs on the muscle and injection site.
- Massage the muscles.
- Elevate the arm or leg if there is swelling.
- Rest, if moving causes pain.

Avoid overstretching for a few days after the injections.

When should I call my child’s healthcare provider?

Call if:

- Pain doesn’t go away after a few days.
- Redness or swelling that last longer than a few days
- Numbness or tingling that last longer than a few days
- Your child doesn’t want to do normal activities after a few days

For uncommon complications, call immediately

Notes