

Botulinum Toxin

Fact Sheet

Botulinum Toxin A (Botox®) is nowadays the mainstay of wrinkle treatment. It is currently the most popular cosmetic treatment in the world. Wrinkles and skin folds are caused by the repeated use of the facial muscles. Just as a freshly ironed shirt will become creased at the elbow as a result of bending the arm, facial lines can form whenever you frown, squint or smile.

Lines can be softened or even eradicated by means of dermal filler injections or medical skin peel treatments. However, these treatments are aimed at the effects rather than the cause. Botox treatment is different in that it offers a *preventative* approach. Botox injection relaxes the frown muscles for a period of 3 to 6 months, so breaking the cycle. Typically clients will have regular Botox injections over a number of years until the frowning habit is broken. Sometimes we use Botox in conjunction with other treatments such as dermal fillers – their effects are complementary.

Botox injections take about 10 minutes. Our doctor will ask you to frown, smile and then look up, so that the exact pattern of forehead and frown movement can be clearly seen for each individual patient. The injections can be slightly uncomfortable but any discomfort can be minimised by applying a topical anaesthetic cream to the area to be treated before any injections.

Afterwards, there will be some tiny red marks for approximately one hour. The injection starts to take effect after about 4 - 10 days and you will feel that it is becoming more difficult to frown. After about two weeks the maximum effect will be apparent.

Very occasionally an individual patient may require more than the usual injection amount and a 'top-up' injection may be required. Some patients who have strong frown muscles (especially men) may need further injections. It is good clinical practice to inject a conservative amount of Botox and to add more at a later date if required.

Botox has been in use for over 30 years as an accepted form of treatment for squints and nervous tics. The substance cannot cause any permanent damage by unwanted travel within the body because it becomes attached to the muscle itself and thus cannot spread from the site of injection. The action on the muscle is not permanent thus the patient's frown is relaxed into 'hibernation' for a few months.

Due to poor tone of the muscle some older patients may feel heaviness over the eyebrows, which can last for 2 to 3 weeks. A lower dose is therefore used in such patients to try to prevent this from happening. There is a very low risk of brow ptosis (droop of the eyebrow) or eyelid ptosis (droop of the eyelid), which completely reverses with a few weeks. Allergy to Botulinum Toxin Type-A is extremely rare. The results of treatment cannot be guaranteed, although the vast majority of people respond very satisfactorily.

Very rarely, some patients become resistant to the drug after several treatments, i.e. it no longer works effectively. In this unlikely event alternative forms of Botulinum Toxin Type-A are available to overcome this problem.

There are a number of people for whom Botox injection is inappropriate. If you are pregnant or trying to conceive you should avoid any type of medication unless absolutely necessary. People with certain muscular diseases or on certain drugs such as aminoglycoside antibiotics may react unpredictably to Botox. If you are on any blood-thinning medication you may need to stop them for a few days prior to Botox treatment.

The UK Nursing and Midwifery Council have recently ruled that injection of Botox by an unsupervised nurse does not reflect best practice. You should note that at present only Vistabel® is licensed for cosmetic use. Nonetheless Botox® and Dysport® have been used for cosmetic treatments for millions of patients and their use appears to be safe. You can be certain that at **me** you will only ever be treated by an experienced doctor in a safe medical environment.

Aftercare Instructions Following Botulinum Toxin Treatment

Potential side-effects:

1. Bruising, redness, swelling and localised pain at the injection site.
2. In 1-2% of patients eyebrow or eyelid ptosis (droop) can occur. This usually lasts approximately two weeks but this risk can be minimised by strict adherence to the aftercare instructions.
3. Rare side effects: headache, nausea, flu-like symptoms.

Aftercare instructions:

1. Avoid touching the treated area for 3-4 hours. After this time, when you wash the area, do so gently and pat it dry very softly with a soft towel. Do not rub the treated area for 48 hours.
2. Remain upright for 4 hours and avoid excessive bending during this time.
3. Avoid sleeping on your face for the first night.
4. For best results, exercise the treated muscles by tensing them and relaxing them for the first hour after treatment. This causes the Botulinum toxin to be absorbed more into active muscles, which is where it is needed.
5. When applying your make-up or moisturiser use dabbing motions instead of rubbing or spreading for the first day.
6. Botulinum toxin takes from 2 to 14 days to become effective. This is dependent on the strength of the muscles injected and the individual response.

7. Do not have any facial treatments that may promote 'tracking' of Botox to neighbouring areas for 7 days.
- 8 Do not fly within the first 24 hours.
9. You should make a follow up appointment 2 – 3 weeks after your treatment.
- 10 If the degree of muscle relaxation is not as you would wish, please contact [me](#).

Remember that treatment with Botulinum toxin is temporary and to maintain the beneficial effects repeat treatment is recommended every 3 to 6 months

You may also be interested in:

Information on chemical peels, please follow [this link](#).

Information on laser skin rejuvenation, please follow [this link](#).

talk to [me](#)

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this treatment please contact us on:

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