BOTOX FAQ:

What is Botox?

Botox injections are a diluted form of purified neurotoxin protein complex derived from botulism toxin. The botulinum toxin is created by the bacterium, Clostridium Botulinum. Also known as Botulinum Toxin Type A, the brand Botox is produced in controlled laboratory conditions and given in extremely small therapeutic doses. Botulinum Toxin Type A is the most studied of the seven different serotypes of botulinum toxin (A, B, C1, D, E, F, G). Each serotype has different properties and actions. No two are exactly alike. Botox is injected into specific facial muscles to paralyze or weaken the muscles that form wrinkles.

Botox is a popular non-surgical injection that temporarily reduces or eliminates frown lines, forehead creases, crows-feet near the eyes and thick bands in the neck.

Botox works by blocking the nerve impulses that tell a muscle to contract. This temporarily paralyzes the muscles that cause wrinkles while giving the skin a smoother, more refreshed appearance. Studies have also suggested that Botox is effective in relieving migraine headaches, excessive sweating and muscle spasms in the neck and eyes.

How do Botox injections work?

Normally your brain sends electrical messages to your muscles so that they can contract and move. The electrical message is transmitted to the muscle by a substance called acetylcholine. Botox blocks the release of acetylcholine. By blocking the release of acetylcholine Botox blocks the message that tells the muscle to contract. Essentially, Botox decreases muscle activity by blocking the release of acetylcholine at the neuromuscular junction. Therefore, muscle spasms stop or are greatly reduced after the injection of Botox.

Here is a more technical explanation of how Botox injections work:

Botox blocks neuromuscular transmission by binding to acceptor sites on motor or sympathetic nerve terminals, entering the nerve terminals, and inhibiting the release of acetylcholine. When injected intramuscularly at therapeutic doses, Botox produces partial chemical denervation of the muscle resulting in a localized reduction in muscle activity.

What are Botox injections used to treat?

Botox injections are most effective for wrinkles that are visible when smiling, laughing, raising the eyebrows or for crow's feet around the eyes. These wrinkles are called

"dynamic" and tend to be much less noticeable when your face is completely relaxed. It also works well for bands in the neck.

Botox injections are widely used to remove facial lines, especially frown lines, "crow's feet," and forehead lines.

Botox Cosmetic is officially indicated for the temporary improvement in the appearance of moderate to severe glabellar lines associated with the corrugator and/or procerus muscle activity in adult patients 65 years of age or younger.

Botox is also indicated for the treatment of cervical dystonia in adults to decrease the severity of abnormal head position and neck pain associated with cervical dystonia.

Botox is also indicated for the treatment of severe primary axillary hyperhidrosis (excessive underarm sweating) that is inadequately managed with topical agents.

Botox is also indicated for the treatment of strabismus and blepharospasm associated with dystonia, including benign essential blepharospasm or VII nerve disorders in patients 12 years of age and above.

Botox is also being investigated for several conditions associated with overactive muscle activity.

What is the active ingredient in Botox?

The active ingredient in Botox injections is a sterile, vacuum-dried purified neurotoxin complex of botulinum toxin type A.

Are Botox injections safe?

Botox injections are relatively safe treatment when administered by a trained medical professional who is experienced with using Botox injections. As with all injectable treatments, there are some potential side effects associated with Botox, but most of these side effects are mild and temporary. Pain, tenderness and bruising may be associated with the injection, and some people have reported a slight headache after treatment.

There is only a small risk of significant side effects from Botox treatment. In fact, the most common significant side effect is a drooping eyelid. This side effect was only experienced by 3.2 per cent of people in one study. The drooping eyelid side effect generally only lasts a couple of days.

It's important to remember that that all medical procedures carry risks as well as benefits, and you need to discuss these with your doctor.

Botox has been around for more than 20 years for the treatment of a variety of conditions. Botox has been injected into millions of people. It has been approved by both Health Canada and the USA Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the temporary treatment of frown lines in people aged 18 to 65.

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 4.1 million Botox treatments were preformed in the United States in 2006. It was the number one minimally-invasive cosmetic procedure in the U.S. in 2006.

The reason that Botox is the number one minimally-invasive cosmetic procedure being done in the United States is because of its excellent safety profile. Extreme side effects are very rare and occasional side effects such as bruising, headache and numbness are usually temporary.

Who is the best candidate for Botox injections?

Botox may or may not be the best treatment for the results you desire. An ideal candidate meets the following conditions:

- Between the ages of 18-65
- Desire to improve the appearance of facial lines and wrinkles
- Knowledgeable about the procedure
- Understands that Botox is not a cure-all
- Understands the limits of what Botox is capable of doing
- Looking for a non-surgical solution
- Looking for a temporary solution
- Realistic in expectations
- Is in good physical and psychological health
- Not using marijuana or anabolic steroids
- Not a heavy user of alcohol
- Is not pregnant or nursing

The preceding is only a partial list of the criteria that your doctor will consider in determining whether or not Botox injections are right for you.

Who should not receive Botox injections?

People who meet the following criteria should not receive Botox injections:

- Pregnant women; although there have been no reports of birth defects with this medicine, no pregnant patients will be treated.
- Breastfeeding; similarly, there is no evidence that Botox is expressed in breast milk but it is best avoided if breastfeeding.

- Patients with a history of neuromuscular disease (multiple sclerosis and myasthenia gravis) or other types of diseases involving neurotransmission should avoid this medicine.
- Patients taking the following medicines should not receive Botox: aminoglycoside antibiotics, penicillamine, and calcium channel blockers (Calan, Cardizem, Dilactor, Norvasc, Procardia, Verelan).
- Known allergy to human albumin (egg white) or Botox; currently there are no documented cases of allergy to Botox.
- Patients with the presence of infection at the proposed injection sites.
- Patients with known hypersensitivity to any ingredient in the formulation.

Do Botox injections hurt?

The smallest needles available are used so the discomfort is minimal and brief. The Botox injections themselves do not tend to sting as much as injections of local anesthetic. Some comparisons that are used to explain the sensation of the Botox injections are “like having your eyebrows plucked”, “getting a bug bit” or “receiving a pin prick”. Overall, the discomfort from Botox injections should be minimal and temporary. If needed, the Botox injection areas can be numbed with ice or a local anesthetic cream.

Some people experience no pain whatsoever.

How long does the Botox injections procedure take?

Most Botox injection procedures take 10 to 15 minutes. There is no recovery time required. You may return to work or continue your usual daily activities immediately following the Botox procedure.

Is there anything that I should do to prepare for receiving Botox injections?

There is not a lot of specific preparation required for the Botox injection procedure.

Before your procedure, you and your doctor should formulate a set of guidelines that need to be followed in order to prevent any Botox complications from arising. These guidelines usually include post-procedure activities to avoid, and your doctor will provide you with those specifics, as they depend on your individual situation.

Many doctors suggest stopping the use of aspirin and anti-inflammatory medications approximately two days before treatments to reduce potential bruising or swelling.

How soon will I see results from my Botox injections?

Most patients start to see some effect at two to three days after Botox injections. For the final Botox result, it often takes five to seven days. Some areas may take as long as two weeks.

Botox injections usually take 3 - 7 days to start restricting the muscles. After the Botox takes effect, some of your lines will disappear completely and others should be minimized.

Lines continue to improve for up to a month after Botox, and results can last for up to 6 months. For most people, Botox results last 3 to 4 months.

What kind of results can I expect to see from Botox injections?

Although the Botox results are quite dramatic, treatments should not radically change facial appearance. The facial muscles are simply relaxed, so lines and wrinkles disappear, and smiles (and frowns) remain.

This procedure can remove or deter wrinkles by preventing the repeated facial expressions that contribute to their formation. Botox cannot improve the overall texture of the skin. Botox cannot tighten the facial skin.

Botox will not improve sagging skin or replace the need for a facelift. Botox cannot improve wrinkles not caused by muscle contractions.

You may see a marked improvement in the moderate to severe frown lines between your brows within days. Improvement may continue for as long as a month, and could last up to 4 months.

Will my face feel numb from Botox injections?

No, your face will not feel numb from Botox injections. Some people do report experiencing a strange sensation when muscles that they are trying to move have been weakened. This been described by some people as “feeling numb”. However, if you touch these weakened areas, you will definitely feel it just as you normally would. Botox does not affect the sensation of touch.

Is there any thing specific that I should do or avoid after my Botox injections?

You should avoid strenuous exercise for 24 hours, lying down for at least four hours and massaging or pressing the Botox injection areas for few hours after the Botox procedure. These activities can all cause the Botox to migrate into muscles that were not supposed to be relaxed and lead to droopy eyelids and other side effects.

Using the muscle intentionally makes it contract and may help to localize the botox to the selected muscle. Do not take any aspirin for two or three days either side of the injections as this may help to reduce the chance of bruising.

What sort of recovery is needed following Botox injections?

Since the procedure is nonsurgical, no recovery time is needed. After Botox Cosmetic treatment, you can get back to work or other activities right away.

Occasionally slight bruising may occur where Botox is injected and a mild headache may follow. Bruising may be greater in patients who are taking aspirin or any blood thinning medicines. These products should be avoided if possible prior to the injection. Muscle weakness is first noted anywhere from 2 to 10 days after injection; the effect is not immediate.

Can I go back to work after receiving Botox injections?

Following injection recovery is immediate, and you can return to work immediately.

Are there any Botox side effects?

There are some potential side effects of Botox. Botox side effects vary according to injection site, dose, frequency of injections, and the level of physician expertise. Botox side effects such as pain, tenderness, swelling or bruising at the injection site are temporary and occur within a few days after treatment.

Very rarely if the botox reaches the upper eyelid muscle there may be transient eyelid drooping also known as ptosis. This is the most significant risk and occurs in about 1 in 1000 injections. It occurs from local spread of the botox from the injection site and can be minimised by accurate dosage, proper placement, as well as keeping in an upright position for three to four hours after the injection. If drooping eyelids occur, it usually resolves over a few weeks. Special eye drops may temporarily reduce eyelid droop if it occurs.

Possible Botox side effects which have been reported include:

- Temporary bruising
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) – when treating cervical dystonia
- Dry eyes
- Double vision
- Facial droop
- Upper respiratory-tract infection
- Headache

- Pain of the face and neck
- Muscle weakness
- Ptosis (eyelid drooping)
- Bruising/soreness at injection site
- Flu like symptoms
- Nausea

How long do Botox injections last?

The beneficial effects of Botox injections last, on average, three to four months with some individuals claiming benefits for up to six months. With each new treatment the results tend to last longer.

How often should I get treated with Botox Cosmetic?

The answer depends on how long you remain satisfied with the results. Since the length of time that the results last vary from person to person you will need to determine, along with your doctor, how often you should have treatment. For most individuals, it is usually 3 to 4 months between treatments.

What are the risks involved with using Botox injections?

The number one risk with Botox injections that most patients are afraid of, is a droopy eyelid after injection. In one study, it was found that this occurs in about 3 percent of patients.

You may also wish to look at the question addressing Botox side effects above.

What are the benefits of using Botox injections?

Some of the benefits of using Botox include:

- Botox has a 20 year track record for both safety and effectiveness.
- There is minimal "downtime", most patients return to their usual activities immediately following the Botox treatment.
- The procedure is non-invasive.
- A Botox treatment can be quickly performed in your doctor's office.
- The cosmetic benefits of Botox last 3-6 months and longer after repeated treatments.
- Studies have shown Botox to be effective in reducing frown lines from 70%-80%.
- Injecting Botox into contracted forehead muscles can smooth and straighten the skin, and give you a more youthful appearance.

- Botox Cosmetic weakens the muscles responsible for squinting and crinkling of the eye area. The treatment effectively reduces or eliminates crow's feet and other wrinkles around the eyes.
- Because Botox treatments are so effective in improving moderate to severe frown lines between the brows, many patients have them as an alternative to a brow lift.

Is Botox FDA-approved?

Yes, Botox is FDA-approved.

When did Botox become FDA-approved?

Botox Cosmetic received FDA approval in 2002 for the temporary treatment of moderate to severe frown lines between the brows in people 18 to 65 years of age.

Is there any danger of botulism from Botox injections?

No. Botulism occurs when large amounts of botulinum toxin are ingested into the system, usually from eating contaminated food. Doses of about 3,000 units are considered highly toxic. There are 100 Units of Botulinum toxin per vial. That means it would require the full contents of 30 vials to be injected at one sitting to cause botulism. The amount of Botox given during a typical cosmetic injection is too small to give a healthy patient a botulism-like illness. During a Botox cosmetic procedure patients receive about 10-200 units.

Once injected into the body, the toxin is rapidly broken down (within hours!), so levels of toxin do not build up over time with subsequent injections.

Given by trained physicians in the correct amount there is no danger of botulism from Botox.

What is hyperhidorsis?

Hyperhidrosis is a disorder characterized by excessive sweating that occurs in 1% to 3% of the population. The excessive sweating can occur in the hands (palmar hyperhidrosis), in the armpits (axillary hyperhidrosis), or in the feet (plantar hyperhidrosis).

How is Botox used to treat hyperhidrosis?

Currently, the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) has approved the use of Botox to treat primary axillary hyperhidrosis or severe underarm sweating. Worldwide about 20 countries have approved the use of Botox in the treatment of axillary hyperhidrosis.

To treat primary axillary hyperhidrosis, a small dose of Botox is injected into the skin of the underarm. Botox prevents the release of the chemical acetylcholine. The blockage of acetycholine stops the signals from the sympathetic nervous system to the sweat glands in the underarm thereby eliminating sweat production. Basically, Botox injections block the nerves in the underarm that cause excessive sweating and thereby prevents sweating in that area.