

PATIENT INFORMATION

Botulinum Toxin

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What is Botulinum toxin treatment?

Botulinum toxin treatment is the most common aesthetic procedure done all over the world for rejuvenation. Botulinum toxin is in use for more than 2 decades and has been used as an anti-aging procedure as well as to treat certain medical conditions.

What is Botulinum Toxin?

Botulinum toxin is a protein that relaxes muscles by blocking signals from the nerves to muscles.

How is Botulinum Toxin derived?

Naturally, botulinum toxin is synthesized by bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*, which causes Botulism. However, for medical purpose, botulinum toxin is derived from bacteria, *Streptococcus suis*.

What are the uses of Botulinum toxin?

Aesthetic concerns such as lines and wrinkles on face which are caused by action of muscles of expression are the commonest indications in dermatology.

Botulinum toxin is used for treating various medical conditions like blepharospasm (difficulty in opening eyelids), strabismus (squint), cervical dystonia (tilted neck), cerebral palsy (mentally challenged children who put criss-cross steps, like scissor) and migraine (type of severe headache) to name a few.

What are all the lines that can be improved with Botulinum toxin?

Lines on the face result from over-activity of muscles. The frown lines between the eyebrows, forehead lines that arise during expression of surprise or hopelessness, bunny lines on the nose and crow's feet at the outer side of eyes can be improved or cleared completely by Botulinum toxin.

What are the other uses of Botulinum toxin?

Many more aesthetic concerns can be addressed with Botulinum toxin. It has been used for shaping or lifting eyebrows, increasing the aperture of eye, lifting the tip of depressed nose tip, lifting the downturned angles of mouth which give a sad look even while smiling, defining the jawline and smoothening the vertical bands in neck. Gummy smile which results due to exposure of gums during smiling can be treated by dropping down the lips by Botulinum toxin.

Botulinum toxin has also been used for facial recontouring. The square outlined face due to bulky muscles at the angle of jaw can be remodeled to give a smoother contour to the face. It has also been used to iron out the chin creases and lengthen the face by increasing the length of lower face, thus helping in making a round face oval, which is more aesthetic.

For how long does the effect of Botulinum toxin last?

When used for improving lines, the duration of action of Botulinum toxin depends upon the activity of the muscle and its usage. A jovial person is bound to get back his lines by 4 months. Likewise, people who deeply concentrate and work need a botulinum toxin touchup earlier. As a generalization, effect of Botulinum toxin lasts for about 4 - 6 months.

When Botulinum toxin has been used for facial recontouring, there is residual effect and hence, over a period of time, the requirement for Botulinum toxin reduces. This is unlike that observed with treatment of wrinkles.

Will my lines worsen if I stop taking Botulinum toxin treatment continuously?

No, Botulinum toxin cannot adversely affect the process of aging or muscle action. However, once the effect of Botulinum toxin wanes off, the natural course of action of muscle sets in and there is recurrence of lines and wrinkles.

How safe is taking Botulinum toxin for aesthetic indications?

Botulinum toxin is a safe treatment with minimal or no side effects. The side effects are more often due to wrong patient selection for procedure, wrong dosage and wrong technique rather than due to the medication itself!

How is the procedure done?

Botulinum toxin is administered by fine injections into the muscle of intention or skin overlying the muscle of interest. As with any injections, there can be mild discomfort while receiving the shot or there may be little swelling which clears off in 30-60mins. The discomfort can be ameliorated by using a topical anaesthetic agent (eutectic mixture of lignocaine & prilocaine or lignocaine and

tetracaine applied for 45 – 60 mins) or application of ice cube at the desired site. Due to rich blood vessel network in face, there are chances of pricking it and subsequently causing a bruise which takes 7 -10 days to clear. The chances of bruise are high when patients are on blood thinning agents like aspirin, elderly individuals (thin skin) or dark individuals in whom it is difficult to discern underlying blood vessels.

Complete relaxation of muscle occasionally gives a heavy feel that improves over a period of time.

The best part of side effects caused by Botulinum toxin is that they are temporary, lasting for few weeks!! There are no permanent side effects due to Botulinum toxin.

Who is best qualified to administer Botulinum Toxin?

A Dermatologist or a Plastic surgeon whose has had special training and certified thereof in use of Botulinum toxin is the best person who can safely administer Botulinum toxin. Aesthetic or Cosmetic Dermatology is a specialty of Dermatology which is being taken up by numerous Dermatologists.

Is there any age constraint for taking Botulinum Toxin?

Botulinum toxin has been recommended for children above 2 years of age for the treatment of cerebral palsy. The dosage of botulinum toxin used is much more in comparison to that used for aesthetic indications (200 – 400units).

Who are not supposed to take Botulinum toxin?

Botulinum toxin is not administered to pregnant mother, lactating mother, person with myasthenia gravis and those taking medications like amiodarone.