

Botox

What is Botox?

Botox is a prescription medicine that is injected into muscles and used temporarily to improve the look of moderate-to-severe frown lines between the brows in people between 18-65 years of age.

It is administered by a healthcare professional as a simple, non-surgical treatment that is injected directly into the muscles between the brows. It works by blocking nerve impulses to the injected muscles. This reduces muscle activity that causes moderate to severe lines to form between the brows.

Botox treatment is quite safe especially when used in small doses and injected directly to a specific area. It's the world's most popular non-surgical treatment.

It has been used to treat:

- increased muscle stiffness in elbow, wrist, and finger muscles in adults with upper limb spasticity;
- the abnormal head position and neck pain that occurs with cervical dystonia (CD) in adults;
- certain types of eye muscle problems (strabismus) or abnormal spasm of the eyelids (blepharospasm) in people 12 years and older.

How does Botox Work?

Botox works by blocking the release of a chemical messenger (neurotransmitter) known as acetylcholine. This neurotransmitter found in the nerve cells usually transmits a nerve impulse to a muscle cell and causes it to contract.

With the absence of acetylcholine the muscle cell is weakened leading to paralysis of the muscle. The botox injection is restricted to the area under treatment simply because the effect is temporary and the nerve fibres have the capability of regenerating after a few months.

Botox injections treat wrinkles on the face by weakening or causing paralysis of the muscles found on the face and pulling the skin. After about a week after the injections, the wrinkles and lines start disappearing. However this does not limit one from forming facial expressions.

How long does it last?

After the injections and the disappearance of the wrinkles and lines, one can have an improved appearance for up to six months before having the treatment repeated. However with continued use, the effects of the injections last longer.

For further information contact Pete Wells
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Information Notes



A number of patients who use the Botox injections end up developing antibodies that neutralise the effect of the injections resulting in ineffective treatment. This only happens when they repeatedly use the treatment.

How safe are Botox injections?

- When administered by medical professionals with a lot of experience in the treatment, the Botox injections are quite safe. There are however some mild and temporary side effects associated with the treatment including pain, bruising and tenderness.
- It is common for most people to experience a slight headache right after the treatment is administered. Others also experience nausea and flu syndromes.
- One of the significant side effects of the treatment is the risk of a drooping eye for a few days. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid this treatment. Just like other medical treatments there are benefits and side effects associated with this treatment.

What is the procedure?

The procedure itself normally requires no anaesthetic and typically only takes around 10 minutes to perform depending on how many areas are being treated.

The following explains the key steps to the Botox procedure:

- Your clinician will first assess where the best location for the Botox injection is by asking you to move certain muscles in your forehead or the area being treated. Everyone's muscles work in slightly different ways and are located in different locations. This is where the skill and knowledge of the clinician is most important.
- The Botox is then injected into the target muscles using a very fine needle which for most people involves very little discomfort at all. Most people report that it feels like a pin prick which lasts for a couple of seconds.
- No recovery time is needed and you can resume normal activities immediately after having had the treatment.
- The effects of the injection are not immediate and they normally take around three to five days before you will be aware of the cosmetic effects. It can take up to one month for some people to see the maximum effects of the treatment. This does however vary from one person to another and depends on the extent of the wrinkles being treated, the person's lifestyle and their medical history.
- It is advisable to avoid alcohol for at least one week prior to treatment and to avoid anti-inflammatory drugs and aspirin two weeks before the treatment. This will reduce the bruising effects that Botox can cause.

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Do providers offering Botox treatment require a license and registration?

There is no statutory regulation for the administration of Botox injections but all independent healthcare providers and recognised dermatologists offering cosmetic procedures must be registered with the appropriate regulatory body and able to demonstrate their compliance to exacting standards and set outcomes.

In the UK, there are three regulatory bodies:

- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) for England
- The Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) for Wales
- The Regulatory Quality and Improvement Authority (RQIA) for Northern Ireland

Healthcare providers and dermatologists must adhere strictly to the clinical governance criteria set out by the regulatory bodies above, under the responsibility of the Nominated Individual (NI).

Although many treatments are available on the high street, this does not mean that they are all unregulated. Botox is a prescription-only medicine and must be prescribed by a doctor or dentist. Independent Prescribers are now able to prescribe Botox and Vistabel independently.

The prescriber must be:

- a doctor registered with the General Medical Council;
- dentist registered with the General Dental Council;
- nurse registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

The important thing is first to recognise that a Botox injection is a medical procedure so it must be done by a medical professional. All staff should be registered and trained medical professionals. As part of the regulatory compliance, they must all be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC).

The popularity of non-surgical cosmetic treatments such as Botox is growing and these treatments are now offered by both medical and dental clinics, and beauty salons.

Nurse Counselor's should be available to offer advice on the most suitable treatment plan, assess suitability and provide details and consultation.

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