

## BOTOX® for WRINKLES

Botox® (Botulinum Toxin Type A) is a protein produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. The effects of botulinum toxin have been known for more than a century, but not until 1980 was the toxin found to be therapeutically valuable for a number of medical disorders. Botox has been used in cosmetic medicine since the early 90's. It has been licensed for the temporary reduction of frown lines and it has been used off-license for other lines and wrinkles on the upper face. Botox is a trade name for Botulinum toxin.

### How does it work?

Botulinum toxin is a nerve impulse blocker. It binds to nerve endings and prevents the release of chemical transmitters that activate muscles. This way, the natural, purified protein relaxes the muscles that cause wrinkles.

Botulinum toxin usually takes full effect within 1 to 2 weeks. After a few weeks or months the nerve endings usually grow new connections to the muscles and the effect wears off. The injections are typically repeated about two to four times a year, as directed by your doctor.

### Is it safe?

Botulinum toxin is a purified protein that is produced from culturing natural organisms. Only very low doses are used. The effects are usually confined to the injected region and do not travel throughout the body.

Botulinum Toxin Type A has been recognised by the American Academy of Neurology, American Academy of Ophthalmology, and American National Institutes of Health as a safe and effective treatment. Its widest medical use has been for eye spasm associated with movement disorders. In cosmetic use there are more than 10 years of clinical experience, involving many thousands of patients testify to the potential benefits of this treatment. Unwanted effects are rare. You may notice slight redness or bruising from the injections. This is only temporary and can be covered by makeup. The most common unwanted effects are headache, flu like symptoms, nausea, drooping of the eyelid or brow, irritation of the treated area, weeping or dry eye, opening of the eyelid, double vision, and an outward or inward turning of the eyelid. These unwanted effects are uncommon in cosmetic treatments. Should they occur are usually transient in nature, and Botox is generally well tolerated by patients. The effects of Botox may be increased with the use of certain antibiotics or other drugs that interfere with neuromuscular transmission. Please let your doctor know about all the medication you are taking.

### Is Botox therapy for me?

If after reading this advice sheet through carefully you are interested in Botox therapy you should arrange a consultation with a cosmetic dermatologist. This will be an opportunity to address any concerns you have and to discuss your expectations and whether Botox might help you achieve them. Precisely how or if it can help depends the severity of your wrinkles, your medical history, and the areas you would like to have treated.

For example, Botox therapy is not generally appropriate for smile lines or for the lower face. It is used more successfully for deep frown lines, forehead creases, and deep crow's feet. It is not the same as a surgical face lift.

It is not a cure for wrinkles and the degree of correction will vary from person to person.

### Which areas can be treated?

Botox therapy is most useful in the treatment of creases between the eyebrows, on the forehead, and around the eyes. It softens deep frown lines and crow's feet, which are the furrows produced by frowning and smiling. It does not remove them entirely.

The treatment should not radically change your facial appearance. The muscles are relaxed a little, so you can still frown, smile, or look surprised without the wrinkles and creases between your brows. It is best to aim for a subtle effect.

Botox should not be used if there is an infection at the injection site.

**What is involved?**

The first step is to have a pre-treatment consultation with a consultant dermatologist. They will evaluate whether Botox therapy is appropriate for you, discuss the risks and benefits, and answer any questions you may have. You will be given this written advice sheet and an appointment for treatment. No skin test is required.

The treatment consists of a few tiny injections, the discomfort is minimal. A typical treatment visit takes about 15 minutes. Anaesthesia is not needed but your doctor may choose to numb the injected area with a cold icepack or anaesthetic cream beforehand. Most patients compare the sensation to an insect bite. Aside from the initial needle prick, you should feel little discomfort.

Slight tenderness and mild bruising are possible. Usually makeup can be reapplied before leaving the clinic, and normal activities can be resumed but strenuous exercise should be avoided for 24 hours. The results can sometimes be seen within the first few hours, but it may take 1 to 2 weeks for the full effect to become apparent.

For your first treatment, the number of small injections you need to get good initial results will depend on which areas are treated. Since the response to Botox, may vary you may need a top up visit a few weeks later in order to get the best effect.

**Preoperative instructions**

Please do not wear makeup to the clinic; if worn, please plan to remove it before treatment.

To minimise the chance of bruising, please do the following:

- Preferably stay off aspirin or aspirin-containing products for 10 days prior to your treatment.
- Avoid alcohol for 24 hours before treatment.
- Be sure to discuss with your doctor any bleeding tendencies and current medications being used.
- Ice will be applied immediately following treatment. If you normally bruise easily, plan to go home and apply ice to the treated area(s) for an hour.

Although the treatments are well tolerated by most patients, you may apply a topical anaesthetic cream to the area to be treated for 1 hour prior to the treatment. You can buy this cream at your local pharmacy.

**Postoperative instructions**

If you feel headache or any pain at the injection sites you may use Paracetamol every 4 to 6 hours. It is best not to take aspirin or alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure.

Ice can be applied immediately following treatment. If you bruise easily, plan to go home and apply ice to the treated area(s) for a few hours.

After treatment you should avoid pressing or rubbing the injection areas for 3 to 4 hours.

Following treatment you should not lie down or bend down for 3 to 4 hours to avoid spreading the toxin to other muscles.

You should use the treated muscles as much as possible (e.g. grimace, smile, frown) in the next 1 to 2 hours to secure a good uptake of the toxin.

Avoid strenuous exercise causing perspiration for 24 hours following treatment. You may otherwise resume normal activities. Most patients continue their normal activities immediately after the procedure. You may return to work the same day. However please avoid the following for 24 hours: facial massage, sunbathing, saunas, peels, facials, laser treatment.

You may apply makeup upon leaving the clinic. Showering and facial cleansing are not restricted. There is no problem with traveling by car, train or aircraft after treatment.

A follow up visit is normally scheduled 4 weeks after treatment to review results and top up areas that need further treatment.