

Treatment with Botulinum Toxin Type A

Corneo Plastic Unit



You have been recommended treatment with botulinum toxin type A (sometimes known as Botox® or Xeomin). This leaflet aims to explain the treatment, what to expect during the procedure and how you may feel afterwards.

It is important to read this leaflet and to discuss any concerns with your consultant before consenting to treatment.

What is botulinum toxin type A?

Botulinum toxin is a protein produced by the bacterium 'Clostridium botulinum' which blocks the release of acetylcholine. Acetylcholine is the substance that is responsible for transmitting electrical impulses which make the facial muscles contract. Botulinum toxin type A has been used as a medical treatment for people who have conditions in which the muscles and nerves that control their eyes or face do not work properly (i.e. Dystonia).

How does botulinum toxin type A work?

Botulinum toxin type A works by a process which blocks the nerve signals that may cause muscle contraction. The muscle then relaxes resulting in

reduced muscle spasm. The effect of botulinum toxin type A is to help to reduce some of the abnormal muscle contraction causing the muscles to become less stiff.

Who carries out the treatment?

Your first treatment with botulinum toxin type A will be carried out by an oculoplastic consultant. Subsequent treatments will be carried out either by an Ophthalmic Nurse Practitioner, Oculo Plastic Fellow or an Oculo Plastic Consultant who will have undergone specialist training in the administration of botulinum toxin type A for oculoplastic patients.

Where will the treatment be carried out?

The treatment will be carried out in the Corneo-Plastic Unit (Eye Clinic) where you attend your regular clinic appointment.

Does it hurt?

People vary in how they feel about the injections. Some people find that the injection hurts a little and others are not concerned about it at all. The needle used for injecting is very fine and therefore most patients experience very little discomfort –just a brief pricking sensation.

How will I feel afterwards?

You should not notice any immediate effect. The initial effects of treatment become visible after, on average, three to five days. The maximum effect is reached in about two weeks. The area injected will feel more relaxed. You will also notice less unwanted movement in the muscles which have been treated. The effect of the treatment generally lasts approximately three months after which further treatment may be required.

What are the risks associated with this treatment?

Botox is generally a safe and effective treatment method. Nevertheless, side-effects can occur. These usually develop within a few days and may last up to two weeks. However, in some cases it may take a few weeks for side-effects to appear.

- **Common side-effects** (more than 1 in 100, less than 1 in 10): headaches, drooping eyelid, skin redness, localised muscle weakness, facial pain, bruising or swelling at the site of the injection.
- **Uncommon side-effects** (more than 1 in 1000, less than 1 in 100): infection, anxiety, numbness, dizziness, inflammation, eye pain, visual disturbance, nausea, dry mouth, skin tightness,

facial swelling, sensitivity to light, itching, dry skin, muscle twitching, flu syndrome, weakness, fever.

- **Rare reported side-effects:** rash, hives, serious allergic reaction, hair loss, loss of eyebrow, noises in the ear and decreased hearing.

Aftercare instructions

After your treatment:

- apply ice pack or cold compress on the treated area within the next two hours to avoid/minimise any swelling, bruise or discomfort
- avoid any vigorous activity or hot environment for at least 3 to 4 hours after the treatment
- Arnica gel may be applied to the treated area three times daily. Apply gently; do not rub into the skin
- keep the treated area clean

Is botulinum toxin type A injection appropriate for all patients who are being referred for this treatment?

No, this treatment is not appropriate for patients who:

- Are allergic to botulinum toxin or any other ingredients of the injection
- Have an infection at the proposed site of the injection
- Are pregnant or breast-feeding
- Object to blood donor products, as botulinum toxin type A contains human serum albumin
- Suffer with Myasthenia Gravis or Lambert-Eaton syndrome
- Have a blood-clotting disorder
- Have a needle phobia
- Have a psychiatric disorder

Please tell the person giving you your treatment if you:

- Have had any problems with injections into your muscles in the past
- Have inflammation in the muscles or skin area your doctor plans to inject
- Have significant weakness or wasting of muscles which your doctor plans to inject
- Have ever suffered from swallowing, breathing disorders or aspiration (inhalation of food or fluids)
- Suffer from any other muscle problems or chronic diseases affecting the muscles
- Have glaucoma
- Have had any surgery or injury to your head, neck, legs or chest in the past
- Are scheduled to have any surgery in the near future

Further Information

For further information visit: www.dystonia.org.uk

Should you have further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us:

Corneo-Plastic Unit

Tel: 01342 414166 / 306782

Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

For enquiries out of hours and at weekends, please call telephone 01342 414000 for assistance.

If you'd like to find out how you can support QVH, please visit www.supportqvh.org



Please ask if you
would like this leaflet
in larger print or an
alternative format.

Corneo Plastic Unit
Issue 4: Ref: no. 0433

Approved by the Patient Information Group
Print October 2023 – Review October 2026

© Copyright QVH NHS Foundation Trust

www.qvh.nhs.uk