



Queen Victoria Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Treatment of Facial Palsy with Botulinum Toxin (Botox)



You have been recommended treatment with Botulinum Toxin. 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?

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. Many people think that Botulinum Toxin is only used for cosmetic purposes. This is not true; it has been used as a medical treatment for many years, for example, as a treatment for muscle spasms/spasticity in people with cerebral palsy.

## How does Botulinum Toxin work?

Over activity of some facial muscles may occur following facial nerve palsy. This can lead to unwanted movements in parts of the face. For example, the eye may close when chewing and smiling or spontaneous facial twitching can occur. Injecting Botulinum Toxin into the affected area temporarily paralyses the underlying muscles and stops the unwanted movement. The effects slowly wear off after about four months. During this time you will be working on the exercises given to you by your therapist to gain maximum benefits from the treatment.

## Who carries out the treatment?

Your first treatment with Botulinum Toxin will be carried out by a consultant who specialises in the treatment of facial palsy. Subsequent treatments will be carried out either by the consultant or a facial palsy rehabilitation therapist. He/she will have undergone specialist training in the administration of Botulinum Toxin for people with facial palsy.

## Where will the treatment be carried out?

The treatment will be carried out in the out-patient department where you attend your regular clinic appointment.

## Does it hurt?

The needle used for injecting is very fine and therefore patients experience very little pain. Mostly, it is just a little sharpness which is over immediately.

## How will I feel afterwards?

You will not feel anything immediately afterwards. The initial effects of treatment become visible within 48 -72 hours. The maximum effect is reached in about one to 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 treatment generally lasts approximately four months after which further treatment may be required.

What happens when the unaffected side of the face is injected? The unaffected side is sometimes injected to prevent it being too strong. This gives the affected side a chance to learn to move again. You will need to do this in conjunction with exercises given to you by your therapist.

If the unaffected forehead is injected there will be loss of movement to that brow and eyebrow. If the unaffected cheek is injected there may be some slight loss of smile movement.

## Is there anything I should do?

It is very important to carry out any exercises and stretches given to you by your therapist after having your Botox treatment. This will ensure that you get the full benefits of treatment.

## What are the risks associated with this treatment?

The dosage of Botulinum Toxin used in this treatment is very small and therefore the risks are small. It is generally a safe and effective treatment method. Nevertheless side-effects can occur and these usually develop in a few days and may last up to two weeks. It is important to note that sometimes it may take a few weeks for side-effects to appear. The potential side-effects can include:-

- bruising or swelling at the site of the injection
- slight feeling of nausea or headache
- tiredness or pain in the arms and legs
- temporary drooping of the eyebrow or upper eyelid
- brief visual disturbances (double vision)
- dry mouth/eyes
- skin rash or itching
- breathing difficulties/swallowing difficulties
- muscle wasting

## Is Botulinum Toxin injection appropriate for all patients who are being referred for this treatment?

Botox injection is not appropriate for patients who fall within any of the categories listed below.

- You are allergic to Botulinum Toxin or any other ingredients of the injection.
- You have an infection at the proposed site of the injection.
- You are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- You object to blood donor products as Botox contains human serum albumin.
- You suffer with Myasthenia Gravis or Lambert-Eaton syndrome.
- You have a blood-clotting disorder.
- You have a needle phobia.
- You 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.

## What do I need to be aware of after the injection?

On rare occasions patients may have an adverse reaction to Botox injection. Please contact your doctor and seek medical attention immediately if you develop any of the following:

- Breathing, swallowing or speech difficulties.
- Severe allergic reaction, (hives, swelling including swelling of the face/throat, wheezing, feeling faint or shortness of breath).
- Please note that this may even occur a few weeks after the injection.

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

Facial Palsy Team

Approved by the Patient Information Group

Issue 2 - ref: 0391

Print month 2018 – Review month 2021

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# Consent Form

## Consent to Botulinum Toxin treatment

I have been informed about alternative treatments and procedures such as cosmetic surgery, laser treatment and collagen injections. All foreseeable risks of Botulinum Toxin therapy listed in the information leaflet have been thoroughly explained to me. My questions regarding the treatment procedure, its potential side-effects and contra-indications, (circumstances where Botox should not be used), have been answered to my full satisfaction.

I understand that the practice of medicine is not an exact science and results are not guaranteed. I understand that the results from this treatment may vary with each individual.

By signing below, I declare my consent to cosmetic treatment with Botulinum Toxin Type A. I also consent to the taking of photographs of the area(s) being treated for promotional use, if required.

### **Patient**

Name of Patient: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Patient: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Doctor**

Doctor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

