



## The Quick Fix: Botox

The scope of cosmetic plastic surgery continues to evolve. The active person demands the maximum benefit with the least amount of down time. Today there are a host of procedures, which can be performed efficiently and safely and still allow a person a quick return to work. Many of these procedures can be performed in the amount of time it takes to eat lunch. Botox, one of the most popular of the "lunch time procedures" has created much public interest. If you are considering this treatment, you should know the following facts about Botox.



### **BOTOX what is it?**

Botulinum exotoxin, is a potent inhibitor of neuromuscular activity. It blocks the communication between the nerve fiber and the muscle preventing contraction of the muscle and a reduction in the appearance of wrinkles. Before becoming one of the most popular cosmetic treatments available, it was widely used for 18 years as a therapeutic agent. During this time period Botox's safety record has been well established.

### **Is Botox for me?**

Like all cosmetic procedures it is not a necessary treatment but if you desire a slight improvement in your look or a "cleaning up" Botox may be for you. It has become a superb option for the patient hesitant to undergo surgery but wanting to erase the deep creases and furrows of the face. By relaxing the muscles causing these wrinkles you can rid yourself of the heavy tension look or remove a misrepresented tired and angry scowl. Patients appreciate its subtle improvement and are pleased when their acquaintances are not quite sure why they look better. Following treatment with Botox you can expect to appear more relaxed and rested.



Botox is commonly used to reduce the heavy vertical creases between the eyebrows, flatten deep forehead wrinkles and smooth out the crows feet area of the eyes. Newer areas that are being treated include the age defining wrinkles around the mouth, nose and the thick muscle bands of the neck. Additionally, early use of Botox may prevent future wrinkles from occurring.

### **What are the risks?**

Fortunately the risks are **extremely** low. Systemic toxicity and paralysis are unheard of and are not a consideration. The amount of toxin used is in such small quantities and acts only locally. You would have to consume over 280 times the treating dose to start to

see toxic side effects. One caution is to patients with muscular or nerve disorders. An underlying neurological disease may have an affect on your treatment. Perhaps the most attractive feature of Botox is that potential side effects from are very rare and all are completely reversible.

**What can I expect when treated?**

You will most likely be treated in a relaxed atmosphere where you can expect to receive a series of small injections into the desired area. Most patients do not find this very painful. The needle used is very small and is placed swiftly and removed quickly. Often a physician will ask you to forcibly and repeatedly contract your muscles to identify the area to be treated. The procedure takes only minutes. You can expect a mild and barely noticeable amount of redness and swelling at the treatment site. However, this will quickly normalize.

**What can I do afterward to optimize my result?**

There are certain actions that are recommended so that the desired muscles preferentially take up the toxin. Most physicians will request that you sit upright for the next couple of hours. Restraint from manipulating the area and repeated contraction of the treated muscles also seems to increase Botox's effectiveness.

**When will I see the results and how long will it last?**

You can generally expect to see results in 3-5 days, although it may take as long as two weeks. Most people can expect to enjoy the benefits for 3-4 months some people for up to 6 months. There seems to be a longer period of effectiveness for patients who have undergone multiple previous treatments although this is not scientifically proven.

**How much does it cost?**

There are many factors that go into the price including: How many areas of treatment are desired, how many patients are being treated on the same day as you and whether this is a touch-up or a primary treatment. However, in general, a single treatment to one area of the face usually cost between \$350-\$600 dollars.

**What is the future of Botox?**

Botox's indication continues to expand. Currently Botox is being used to reduce excessive underarm and palmar sweating, in addition to being used as an adjunct during surgical and laser procedures. Relief from migraine headaches is a new and interesting indication for Botox. Many innovative ideas continue to be developed for Botox use. Whatever its uses, the safety and convenience of Botox assures it is here to stay.



***Steven H. Dayan, MD, FACS***  
***The Chicago Center for Facial Plastic Surgery***  
***2900 N. Lake Shore Drive, Manor Building, Suite 430***  
***Chicago, Illinois 60657***