

Botulinum Toxin and “Botox®”

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The introduction of Botulinum Toxin, known widely as “Botox®”, started the current trend of medical aesthetics. Before Botulinum Toxin became available, most people wanting to improve their looks, had to go to the plastic surgeon for surgery.



The introduction of injecting tiny doses of Botulinum Toxin into the muscles of the forehead and around the eyes to paralyse the muscles that wrinkle the skin, was revolutionary. When it first started, Botulinum Toxin was used in rather large doses which often completely paralysed certain areas - often giving slightly weird looks (such as “Vulcan highbrows”).

As with all areas of medicine, experience and studies have shown us how to improve on our early techniques. We now use far smaller doses spread into more locations to give a more natural appearance. We aim to weaken muscles rather than paralyse them, leaving some facial expression by either completely getting rid of wrinkles or reducing them significantly.

By careful use, we can also make some surprising changes. We are able to change the shape of the eyebrows, either giving more of an arch or less of an arch as required. We are

also able to treat wrinkles on the top of the nose (“bunny lines”). We can also make the eye a little wider, giving an attractive wide eye effect.

Botulinum Toxin or “Botox®”?

There are three different sorts of Botulinum Toxin that can be used in aesthetics. One is called “Botox®”, one is called “Dysport®” which has been re-branded as “Vistabel®” and the third is called “NeuroBloc®”. These names are all trademarks used by companies and are not the name of the substance – which is Botulinum Toxin.

One of the companies, Allergan, was the most successful at the early promotion of this treatment, their product called “Botox®” is the best known. Unfortunately, they have been so successful, most people seem to think Botulinum Toxin is “Botox®” and vice versa - which can cause a little bit of a problem as the different products have slightly different properties.

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To avoid confusion, we should all really use the name Botulinum Toxin rather than one of the trademarks such as “Botox®”.

How does Botulinum Toxin work?

Botulinum Toxin destroys the end of motor nerves that make muscles move. After about three to six months, the nerves grow new ends and so the effects appear to “wear off”. When first injected, Botulinum Toxin binds to the

nerves almost immediately and therefore doesn't spread very far. This does mean that quite a few injections are needed to get the desired effect, but also it means that Botulinum Toxin does not spread around the body.

By affecting the ends of the motor nerves, the local muscles are weakened or paralysed. By choosing the right muscles to treat, we can therefore alter their function to get the desired effect - usually reducing or getting rid of wrinkles.

Is Botulinum Toxin dangerous?

Like almost every medicine or drug, Botulinum Toxin is perfectly safe if used in the correct method and in the correct dose. It is only called Toxin because it was discovered as a lethal substance when taken in massive doses. If you were to swallow massive amounts of it, it could paralyse you and stop you from breathing.

However Botulinum Toxin is now used in many areas of medicine. In children with spastic paralysis, doses 10 to a 100 times higher than those used in medical aesthetics are safely injected into children's muscles. This practice has been going on for well over 15 years and no long-term effects have occurred. Therefore, the tiny doses used in medical aesthetics are now known to be very safe and do not accumulate in the body to cause a long term problem.



If you would like to know more about Botulinum Toxin at Absolute Aesthetics, please look at the website:

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