

FAQ's: Anti-Wrinkle Injections

What are Anti-Wrinkle Injections, how do they work and are they safe?

Anti-wrinkle injections contain Botulinum Toxin A. This works by blocking nerve signals in the body and relaxing those muscles near where it is injected. When used as a cosmetic treatment it has the effect of softening wrinkles and smoothing out facial appearance.

Most people have heard of Botox®, the most commonly used brand of botulinum toxin type A. It is a purified protein produced by bacteria in laboratory conditions. It is safe and widely used within the NHS to treat a range of medical conditions. Other brands of botulinum toxin are available, but I choose to use Botox® as it is the most widely researched. I also believe it gives the best results.

What does it Treat?

Botox is an excellent treatment for fine lines and wrinkles that are associated with movement (dynamic lines). For deeper, more set lines (static wrinkles) more than one botox treatment may be required or other treatments, such as dermal fillers, may be more appropriate.

Botox can delay wrinkle formation, if started before fixed wrinkles are established. However, there is a careful balance when deciding to treat younger patients. Premature treatment can make someone look older rather than the more youthful look desired.

Whether or not treatment is required or appropriate is always decided on an individual patient basis.

What should I expect during the consultation?

The consultation and treatment typically lasts around 45 minutes. After a thorough discussion about the procedure and completing the consent forms, I will take a pre-procedure photograph. The muscles around the areas of concern will then be treated with Botox using an extremely fine, short needle. Afterwards the treated area may have some slight redness and swelling, which normally resolves within an hour or two. You will be given full verbal and written after care instructions.

I offer a complimentary 2 week follow up appointment to check you're happy with the results.

Does Botox hurt?

Rather than being painful most people describe Botox as a little uncomfortable. Some factors may make it feel more painful such as stress or hormonal fluctuations. The use of an ice pack prior to injection can make treatment more comfortable. Please ask if you would like this to be considered before your treatment.

When will I see the effects, how long does it last and is it permanent?

The treatment effects vary between individuals, but usually take between 4 -14 days to materialise. I advise people to expect the effects to last 3 months on their first treatment. Subsequent treatments typically last 4-6 months. As the effects wear off, you will notice your facial muscles moving a little more freely and the wrinkles to gradually reappear.

Is there anything I should consider before or after having Botox?

- You can resume most normal activities after the treatment.
- For the first 4 hours after the treatment:
 - avoid lying down.
 - try to exercise the targeted muscles with gentle facial expressions.
 - avoid touching or rubbing the injected area.
- After 4 hours you can apply makeup, but take care not to apply too much pressure.
- If you notice any bruising, applying a cool compressor or using arnica can help minimise this.
- Avoid exercise for 24hrs after treatment.
- Avoid alcohol for 24hrs after treatment.
- Avoid extremes of heat for the first 24 hours after treatment. For example hot showers/bath, saunas, steam rooms or sun exposure.
- Avoid anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen or aspirin) or supplements (Cod Liver Oil, glucosamine, Vitamin A, B or E) or St John's Wart for 2 days before and after treatment, as these can increase your risk of bruising.
- Avoid cosmetic products containing Retinoids for 3 days either side of the procedure.
- Avoid treatments such as chemical peels, dermabrasion or laser treatments 4 weeks either side of the procedure.

Are there any side-effects from the treatment?

Most people find the injection causes some mild discomfort and local swelling which subsides after 48 hours. Bruising around the injection sites is also common. Taking arnica tablets 2 days either side of your treatment may help minimise this. Some people describe a mild headache or flu like symptoms which is related to having injections into the facial muscles and usually resolves after 24 hours. Paracetamol will help, but avoid ibuprofen or aspirin since they can increase bruising.

If Botox migrates to unwanted sites it can cause weakness and drooping of the eyebrow or eyelid, or facial asymmetry. This is very rare.

Who should avoid having Botox?

- Pregnant women or breast feeding mothers.
- Patients with certain conditions affecting the connections between nerves and muscles (such as Myasthenia Gravis and Eaton-Lambert Syndrome).
- Patients with certain bleeding disorders or taking blood-thinning medication such as Warfarin and Clopidogrel.
- People with a previous allergic reaction to botulinum toxin, or with allergies to egg or human albumin.
- People taking aminoglycoside antibiotics (such as gentamicin).
- Anyone with a skin infection in the area to be treated.