

BOTULINUM TOXIN AND FILLERS

PATIENT INFORMATION GUIDE

Introduction

Botulinum toxin is a powerful chemical agent and its use and administration is restricted to prescription by a doctor on a named-patient basis. There are 5 known types of Botulinum toxin, and we use type A. It should only ever be administered after careful medical examination of the patient.

Essentially, Botulinum toxin and fillers are used for the cosmetic treatment of facial lines, and the rejuvenation of skin and underlying tissues. However, from a purely functional perspective, Botulinum toxin can be used to control muscle spasm, pain and excessive sweatiness, and in these cases may be available to patients on the NHS.

In its more common cosmetic usage, Botulinum toxin works by stopping the transmission of nerve impulses to the facial muscles that contract and cause wrinkles, such as frown-lines between the eyebrows and crows' feet around the eyes. Unable to frown or perform other basic muscle contractions, patients find that about a week after a Botulinum toxin injection their facial wrinkles smooth out, giving them a more relaxed and youthful look. This effect begins to wear off after two-to-three months, at which point the facial muscles start to work again. This is usually the time when most patients come back for a top-up.

Fillers work by bulking up facial tissue, and can be used to fill in lines and contour dips in the face. Most fillers are temporary, lasting between six months and two years. You should be very careful if considering permanent fillers because they often have undesirable late complications which are very difficult to treat.

Where should I go for more information and support?

BAPRAS' cosmetic surgery checklist
Department of Health – Cosmetic surgery
BAAPS - British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons