

The treatments are carried out in the eye outpatient department on the ground floor, west wing of the Royal Bournemouth Hospital. Please report to reception on arrival.

For further information and non-serious queries regarding your treatment, please email uhd.btxa@nhs.net or call **0300 019 1515**.

Botulinum toxin injections

To read this leaflet in a different language, please visit our website: www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499** or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

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The Eye Unit

Information and advice for patients
about botulinum toxin injections

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Introduction

This leaflet aims to provide you with some information about starting a course of botulinum toxin (Botox) injections to ease your symptoms. It will also help you decide if Botox injections are right for you. If you are experiencing symptoms many times a day, then this treatment may be worth considering.

What is botulinum toxin?

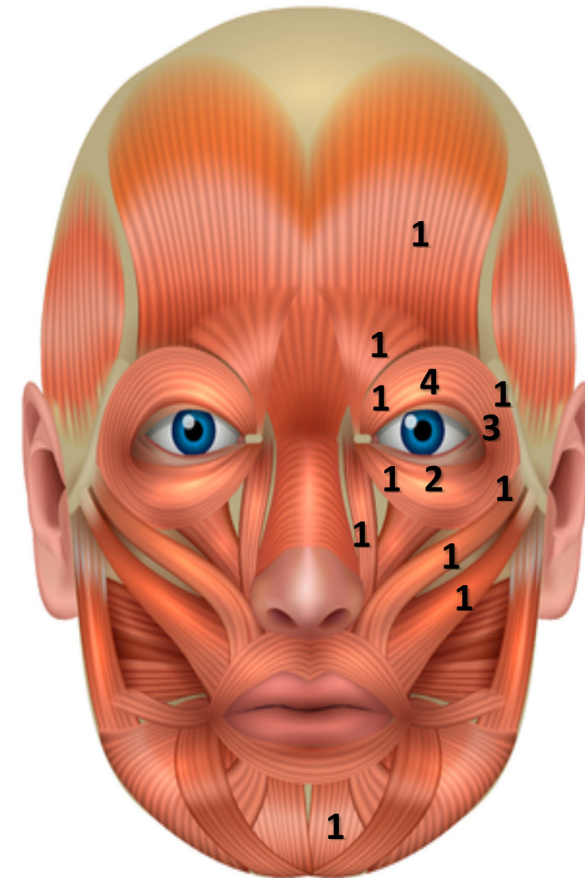
Botulinum toxin is naturally produced by a type of bacteria called *Clostridium Botulinum*. The toxin is purified and manufactured to produce Botox and used to treat a number of medical conditions. In the Eye Outpatient Department we use botulinum toxin manufactured by Allergan.

What conditions can Botox injections treat?

Botox injections are licenced to be used for:

- blepharospasm: uncontrolled eyelid closing.
- hemifacial spasm: uncontrolled spasm of one side of the face.
- strabismus: abnormal alignment of the eyes, also known as a squint.

Where are Botox injections given for Hemifacial spasm and other eye conditions?



1. Hemifacial
2. Entropion
3. Crocodile tears
4. Lid closure

What are the side effects of botulinum toxin?

As with all medications there are possible side effects, so if your symptoms are mild, you may feel these small risks outweigh the benefits of treatment.

- Common (1:20): bruising, dry eye
- Uncommon (1:100): eyelid drooping/facial droop
- Rare (1:1000): double vision, allergy
- Very rare (1:100,000): visual loss, penetrating eye injury, difficulty with swallowing, breathing, or speech.

If you have left the department following Botox injections and you have difficulty with swallowing, breathing, or speech you should immediately go to your emergency department.

You should not have botulinum toxin if you are pregnant, this is because it is not licenced. There is a greater risk of bruising and bleeding if you are taking blood thinning (anti-coagulation) medication. You can still go ahead with your Botox treatment and if you bruise you can apply a cold compress.

Alternative therapies

Tiredness and stress can make symptoms worse. Some patients find that simple measures can help reduce their symptoms, for example:

- wearing sunglasses if spasms are triggered by light.
- using lubricating drops if dry eyes are a trigger. You can purchase these from your local chemist, or your GP can prescribe them to you.

- distraction techniques: rubbing the side of the head, whistling/singing.
- stress management and relaxation techniques.

What should I expect during a Botox clinic?

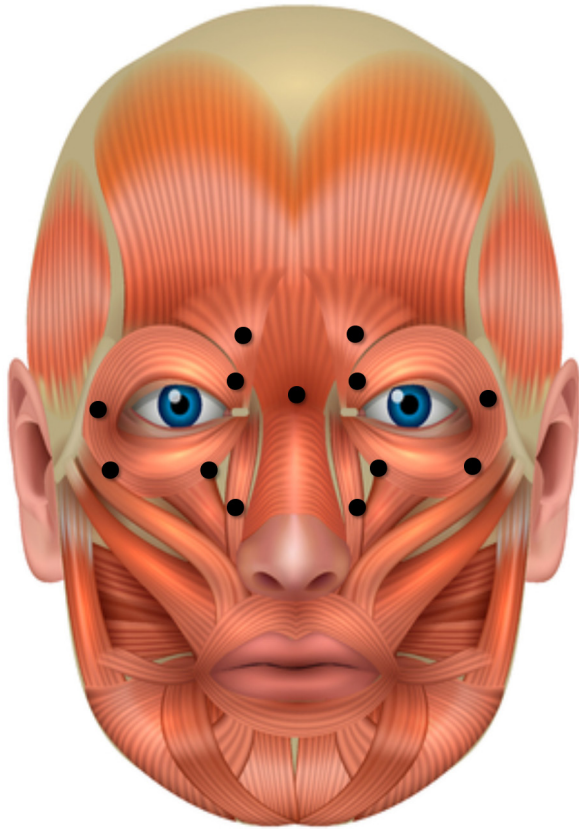
Before administering the Botox injections, you will have a short discussion with your clinician about your symptoms and the sites to be injected. The Botox injections only take a few minutes.

At the start of the treatment, you will be asked to sign a consent form for a course of Botox injections. You are free to change your mind and stop the treatment at any point.

The Botox is stored in the fridge, as it enters the muscle it may feel cold and sting a little. A local or general anaesthetic is not necessary. You will need to sit in a reclining chair for comfort and for the clinician to give your treatment. Treatment is customised for your specific problem and may vary at each of your visits depending on the response to treatment. It is normal for the effect of Botox to change slightly, even with the same dose and injection sites. Monitoring your symptoms using a diary, photographs, or video is very helpful. A follow up appointment is not needed after your injections.

You will be asked to contact the hospital using the details at the back of this leaflet to request a further appointment when you feel your symptoms are returning. This will be offered within 2-3 weeks of contacting us. If your symptoms resolve, or are no longer troublesome, you can simply cancel your appointment and rebook when needed.

Where are Botox injections given for Blepharospasm?



We also use Botox off licence, this means that doctors have found that Botox also works very well for the following conditions:

- entropion: eyelid rolling inwards causing eyelashes to scratch the eye.
- crocodile tear syndrome: eye watering when eating or drinking.
- facial weakness and reduced blinking: temporary eyelid closure for eye protection.

In the eye outpatient department, patients are mainly referred for blepharospasm and hemifacial spasm. If appropriate, your consultant will discuss other possible Botox treatment with you.

How does it work?

Botox works by blocking specific nerve transmission (stopping the signals some nerves send) in the treated area which results in the therapeutic effect (treats the symptoms). It is important to remember the effect is temporary (up to 26 weeks), so you will need repeated injections. The effect of the Botox injections typically lasts twelve weeks, but you may be aware of symptoms returning at a different time. It is not advisable to treat more frequently, as this can cause treatment resistance or immunity.