

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Botox Injections

Time marches on and, unfortunately, the march often leaves its telltale marks on our faces in the shape of prominent forehead creases, brow furrows, and eye lines (crow's feet). In the past, facial surgery was the only way to smooth out the affects of aging. Now, however, there is a minimally invasive way to soften facial lines and wrinkles.

Botulinum toxin, more commonly known as Botox, is a sterile, purified protein produced from the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*. Botox injections are a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved treatment that offers temporary improvement in the appearance of moderate to severe facial lines and wrinkles. Botox injections are proving extremely popular. In the past year, the number of Botox treatments increased 60 percent.

The treatment works by injecting small amounts of the purified protein into the muscles in the affected areas. This, in turn, weakens the muscles and lessens the lines of facial expression. The result is a smooth, improved appearance; the results last four to six months.

As with any treatment, there are some side effects. Sometimes an injection does not take and a touch-up is necessary. One in 10 patients develops a small bruise at the site of injection that may take several weeks to heal. Other, rare and always reversible, side effects are drooping of the eyebrow or eyelid and double vision.

People with neuromuscular diseases, allergies to human albumin or botulinum toxin, and women pregnant or breastfeeding should not have Botox treatment. Patients should avoid alcohol and aspirin or anti-inflammatory medication for a period before the treatment.

The physician can repeat the treatments every three to four months. There are no known long-term side effects.



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