

Botulinum Toxin Injections to help manage spasticity

Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy

This leaflet is for patients who require Botulinum Toxin injections. It will advise you of the risks, benefits and alternatives of having these injections.

What are Botulinum Toxin injections?

Botulinum Toxin is a substance produced by a type of bacterium and it has been developed into a treatment for spasticity. The term 'spasticity' is explained in the paragraph below. The toxin is diluted in order to inject it into a muscle, where it blocks the communication between nerves and the muscle. This leads to temporary weakness and relaxation of the muscle. The injection of spastic muscles with Botulinum Toxin is only done when the muscle over activity is causing a significant problem or risk to the individual.

What is focal spasticity?

After damage to the brain or spinal cord, muscles can become overactive and stiff (this is known as spasticity). When this happens to a single muscle or a small group of muscles, rather than throughout the body, it is called focal (localised) spasticity. Sometimes this stiffness in a muscle can help a person to do something, such as standing when leg muscles are very weak. However, it can sometimes lead to problems, such as difficulties with daily tasks or pain. Prolonged spasticity can lead to a loss of range of movement in a muscle.

What are the benefits of Botulinum Toxin injections?

Botulinum Toxin injections are used for a number of different reasons:

- To improve the effects of treatments aimed at maintaining or increasing a range of movement
- To improve or enable tasks (such as being able to open your hand for washing)
- To improve or enable active functional activity (such as relaxing the calf muscles to enable the foot to be flat on the ground when standing)
- To decrease pain
- To improve posture

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

How long do the effects last?

The clinical effect of these injections occurs gradually over 4-7 days, and in most situations last for 3-4 months (RCP 2018).

What are the risks from Botulinum Toxin injections?

Serious complication following Botulinum Toxin injections are rare, however the following have been known to occur:

- Pain where the injections are given
- Bruising where the injection is given
- Flu-like symptoms
- Excessive muscle weakness and temporary swallowing problems
- Rarely, there is the possibility of anaphylaxis, which is a severe allergic reaction to the medication and requires urgent medical attention

If you believe you have had a serious reaction to an injection, please seek urgent medical attention at the nearest accident and emergency department. For less serious possible side effects please consult your GP.

What are the alternatives to Botulinum Toxin injections?

- Stretching
- Splinting
- Anti-spasticity medications

These interventions can be undertaken without injection but may not be as effective.

What to expect at the appointment?

On the day of the procedure:

- You can eat or drink normally and take your usual medication unless you are contacted beforehand by the Consultant with alternative arrangements.
- The appointment will include both an assessment and appropriate treatment which can take 30-60 minutes.
- We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. Your doctor or therapist will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure or treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

After the procedure:

- You can leave immediately if you do not feel unwell or experience any side effects.
- You can continue with your normal daily activities
- You will be booked for a review appointment and given an information sheet about what treatment you have received and any further advice/treatment that you may need to complete

What to do if you have any concerns?

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about the injections at your clinic appointment and we will discuss things further.

References

Royal College of Physicians (2018) *Spasticity in adults: management using botulinum toxin National guidelines 2nd Edition*.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。