

The Aesthetic Centre at Perimeter North Family Medicine

Patient Education Handout

BOTOX INJECTIONS: COSMETIC DENERVATION OF FROWN, FOREHEAD, AND EYE EXPRESSION LINES

What is Cosmetic Denervation?

Cosmetic denervation is a procedure used to improve the appearance of "worry lines," "frown lines," "crow's feet," and other so-called "dynamic" or aging wrinkles. "Dynamic" wrinkles occur when we smile, laugh, or frown and the delicate muscles underlying the skin contract. In cosmetic denervation, botulinum toxin ("Botox") is injected into these muscles. Botulinum toxin works by weakening these tiny facial muscles. By weakening these tiny muscles, the overlying skin will smooth out, whereas untreated facial muscles contract normally, allowing facial expression to be unaffected. Hence, those severe frown lines between the eyes, forehead creases, and crow's feet around the eyes can be smoothed out. Although cosmetic denervation is a relatively new treatment for wrinkles, botulinum toxin injections were FDA approved in 1989 and have been used safely and effectively used for over a decade for many neurologic disorders. No irreversible clinical effects have been reported. Today the use of Botox has emerged as an exciting new treatment for erasing the visible consequences of aging skin.

How is Cosmetic Denervation Performed?

Cosmetic denervation is a simple and safe procedure. A small amount of diluted Botox is injected with a very fine needle into several locations of the muscles of the face (particularly the area of the frown creases of the forehead and the crow's feet lateral to the eyes). Because the needle is so fine and only a tiny amount of liquid is used, the pain associated with the injections is usually tolerable without anesthesia. We try to minimize the discomfort by applying cold compresses before each area is treated. The medicine stings during the injection and has been compared to the sting on an insect bite, but it clears rapidly within minutes. You will be able to drive and engage in your normal daily activities immediately after your injections. A small number of people will have some temporary bruising of the skin at some injection sites, which fades over several days. Foundation can be applied immediately if this occurs. Otherwise there will be no visible signs of your treatment.

What are the Contra indications? Who Should Not be Treated With Botox?

Botox is not recommended for the following:

- Those being treated at the same time with tissue fillers (collagen)
- Persons allergic to human albumin or botulinum toxin
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women
- Those with neuromuscular disease such as myasthenia gravis

Are There any Side Effects?

Mild, temporary bruising may occur. Very slight droopiness of the upper eyelid occurs in about 2% of people who have their frown lines injected. About 5% of people who have their forehead injected immediately above the eyebrows may notice this effect. A much smaller number of people will notice slight asymmetry of the lower face after injections of the crow's feet muscles. These effects are not usually noticeable by others and fully recover after 3 to 5 weeks. An extremely rare side effect -temporary double vision- has been reported in the literature. To minimize the possibility of such rare effects, please be sure to follow the post treatment instructions.