

## BOTOX INJECTIONS: *An option for chronic migraine prevention*

### What is Botox?

- Botox is a protein called Onabotulinum toxin A, produced by a bacteria, Clostridium Botulinum.
- A purified form of protein is used for medical therapy.

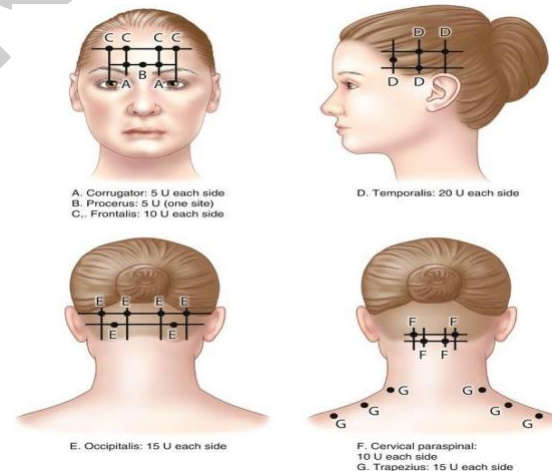
### How does Botox work for migraine?

- Botox works by an effect on sensory nerves and blocks chemicals that carry pain signals.
- Botox may also decrease muscle contraction, which may be beneficial in certain zones.

In June 2012, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) issued guidance approving the use of Botox to prevent chronic migraines. Strict criteria determine who is eligible for the treatment.

### Where are the injections?

- The physician will administer injections based on a protocol targeting various zones, with 31 to 39 points (155 to 195 units).
- While this may seem excessive, the process takes approximately 20 minutes.
- Injections are typically given every 12 weeks until you no longer have chronic migraines or until the treatment proves ineffective.



### How effective is Botox for chronic migraine?

The goal is to improve quality of life by converting chronic migraines into episodic ones rather than eliminating them completely.

Roughly:

- 25% of patients will respond well to the first or second injections.
- 50% show improvement after 1-2 injection sets but require more for better results.
- 25% do not see any improvement.

### How long does Botox take to work?

Botulinum toxin's effect on the nerves takes days to weeks, so don't expect significant improvement in chronic migraines in less than four weeks.

### Who can't have Botox for migraine?

Botox is not advisable to use if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. There is an increased risk of side effects if you suffer from another neurological disease (e.g., Bell's palsy, neuropathy, or myasthenia gravis) or if you have had cosmetic botulinum toxin injections in the past three months.

#### Please tell the pain team if you:

- have had problems with Botox injections in the past.
- have problems with swallowing, inflammation, weakness, or wasting of the muscles/skin where your doctor plans to inject.
- are taking any blood-thinning medicine or will have an operation soon.

### What are the side effects?

Minor cosmetic changes in the forehead and eyebrows (ptosis) may occur, along with injection site pain. Neck and shoulder weakness may occur rarely. Most side effects resolve over time, and allergies to Botox are extremely uncommon.

Less than 1 in 100 may experience side effects.

- Difficulty in swallowing
- Skin pain
- Jaw pain
- Swollen eyelid(s)

#### Visit the accident and emergency if you have any of the following after Botox treatment:

- Difficulty in breathing, swallowing, or speaking.
- Vives or swelling, including to the face or throat.
- Wheezing, feeling faint, or shortness of breath.
- Any other suspected side effects that you feel could be because of Botox treatment.

**\*\*\*\*After Botox injection for migraines, wait at least 24 hours before vigorous exercise or consuming alcohol. Avoid lying down for 4 hours, and do not wash your hair for 24 hours.**

### Do you need any help traveling home from the hospital?

Yes, it is always better if someone can accompany you.

**If you have any queries, please contact: <https://paincure.co.uk>**

#### References:

- Frampton JE, Silberstein S. Onabotulinumtoxin A: A Review in the Prevention of Chronic Migraine. *Drugs*. 2018;78(5):589-600.
- Ashkenazi A, Blumenfeld A. Onabotulinumtoxin A for the treatment of headache. *Headache*. 2013;53 Suppl 2:54-61.
- Dodick DW, et al. Onabotulinumtoxin A for treatment of chronic migraine: pooled results from the double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled phases of the PREEMPT clinical program. *Headache*. 2010;50(6):921-36.