

PATIENT INFORMATION

Botulinum Treatment for Blepharospasm and Hemi-facial Spasm

Information for new patients

What is blepharospasm and hemi-facial spasm?

Both blepharospasm and hemi-facial spasm are also referred to as dystonia.

Dystonia is a medical term that describes a range of movement disorders that cause involuntary muscle spasms and contractions.

Blepharospasm is the involuntary closure of the eyelids, caused by the spasm of muscles surrounding the eyes. This contraction in some cases results in complete closure of the eyes, but symptoms mainly include twitching of the eyes or frequent blinking. The cause is not known, but it's thought to be caused by abnormality or damage in the area of the brain dealing with control of movement.

Hemi-facial spasm occurs on one side of the face and can result in complete closure of one eye, and spasms across the cheek, face and neck areas. The cause of hemi-facial spasm is often unknown although it is thought to be due to irritation of the facial nerve due to pressure from a blood vessel in some cases.

What is the effect of Botulinum toxin?

Botulinum toxin is given in the form of injections; tiny doses are injected just under the skin in the affected areas. The effect of the treatment is to weaken the muscle responsible for the contractions. Botulinum toxin does not cure the condition it only treats the symptoms of blepharospasm and hemi-facial spasm.

How long has Botulinum toxin been in use?

It has been used to treat eye disorders for more than 30 years.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.