

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Botulinum Toxin Treatment for Squint

This leaflet is for patients attending the clinic for the first time.

### **What is the effect of botulinum toxin?**

Botulinum toxin causes a temporary, partial or complete, paralysis (weakness) of the muscle into which it has been injected.

### **Will botulinum toxin affect my general health?**

The treatment is safe and there is no risk of developing botulism or food poisoning. We have never had a patient experience any general health problem with botulinum, but all medication carries a small potential risk of a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

When deciding whether or not to use botulinum toxin during pregnancy it is important to weigh up how important its use is to your health against the known or possible risks to you and your baby. If treatment is not absolutely necessary, it would usually be advisable to postpone treatment until you have given birth or weaned your child.

## **Who will I see when I attend the clinic?**

You will be examined by an orthoptist and then you will see one of the doctors. If the treatment is suitable for you, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form and you will usually receive the treatment on the same day in the clinic. You should expect to be in the clinic for the whole afternoon.

## **What is the treatment procedure?**

You will be given local anaesthetic drops to numb your eye. These drops are very effective in taking away the surface sensation of the eye, but you might still experience some discomfort when the injection is given, especially if there is scar tissue around the muscle from previous surgery. After the local anaesthetic drops you will be given a drop to reduce the risk of bleeding when having the injection.

You will then have some wires attached to your forehead which connect to a loudspeaker – this allows the injection to be precisely placed in the muscle by monitoring the muscle's electrical activity, which is heard as a noise from the loudspeaker.

During the procedure, you will be asked to lie back on a couch. Keeping your head still throughout, we will ask you to look to one side with your eyes to place the injection, and then to the other side to use the muscle. You will hear a loud noise from the loudspeaker and the medication is injected. The injection will be held in place for 35 seconds. Occasionally, we may inject more than one muscle.

## **What happens after the injection?**

You will be asked whether you would prefer to wear an eye pad or your own glasses to protect your eye; because your eye is numb, it needs to be protected for about three hours after the injection in case something blows into it without your knowledge. You may feel an ache in your eye after the injection and you can take a painkiller if necessary.

## When should I expect to see an effect from the treatment?

You will usually notice the effect about two days after the injection.

## How long does the effect last?

This can vary, but it usually lasts for weeks, and occasionally months, before it wears off. To begin with, you may notice a temporary reversal of your squint, followed by gradual straightening of the eyes as the paralysis wears off.

## What are the possible side effects?

Nearly all side effects are temporary and improve with time. Potential side effects are as follows:

- Temporary reversal or change in the direction of squint.
- Temporary double vision – you should **not** drive while you have double vision. It is very important that you discuss this with the doctor before treatment if this is of particular concern to you (see DVLA website: double vision and driving).
- Temporary drooping of the eyelid on the injected side – this usually recovers after a few weeks.
- Bruising of the surface of the eye – the eye looks red (subconjunctival haemorrhage).
- Bruising around the eye affecting the lids – looks like a black eye
- Rarely, there may be a scratch on the front of the eye (cornea) from the anaesthetic used before the injection or from minor injury whilst the eye is still numb.
- Very Rarely the injection can cause permanent paralysis of the injected muscle.
- There is an extremely rare possibility of the needle perforating the eye or causing serious eye or vision damage. The risk is no greater than in 1:10,000 injections.

## **When do I return to the clinic?**

We like to see all our new patients one or two weeks after the injection. If the first injection did not produce an adequate effect, we may offer a repeat injection at that visit.

Other important information Botulinum toxin has been used to treat eye disorders for more than 30 years.

Although Botulinum toxin was originally introduced for the treatment of squint in 1979 (with our clinics successfully treating patients since 1982), the manufacturers have never applied for a drug product licence. We use it on a 'named patient' basis, and records are kept of all injections and patient details. This is one of many examples of a drug with a product licence for one condition being used safely and successfully for another condition.

If you are not clear about any aspect of this treatment or have any questions, please ask the doctor or orthoptist to explain further. Please keep this information sheet for future reference.

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