

Treating blepharospasm with Botox injections around your eye

Ophthalmology

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Information for Patients

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What is blepharospasm?

Blepharospasm is a condition which causes spasms in the muscles around the eyelids. These are movements that you cannot control. It appears as uncontrollable blinking.

What causes blepharospasm?

We do not know what causes blepharospasm. Some people find that stress makes it worse. Sometimes people may have similar symptoms when there is a problem with the surface of their eye. The side effects of some medicines can also be similar to these symptoms.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Blinking a lot more than normal (excessive blinking).
- Not being able to stop your eyelids closing.
- Symptoms can begin around the age of 40 to 60 years. They can affect both eyes.
- Symptoms can be mild and not happen very often at the start. In some people they can get so bad that it is difficult to open the eyes for a long time. This can affect normal daily activity.
- Facial grimacing can sometimes happen.

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How is it treated?

We may be able to treat blepharospasm with injections of Botox (botulinum toxin) into the skin around the eyes using a tiny needle. The injections help to relax the muscles around your eyes. Other types of botulinum toxin, such as Dysport, are sometimes used, but the risks and benefits are the same.

What are the risks and side effects with botulinum toxin injections?

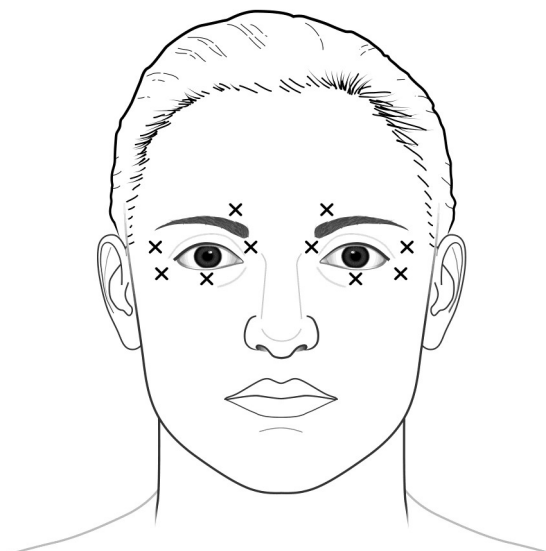
Botulinum toxin is a chemical made by a bacteria called *Clostridium botulinum*. In large amounts it is toxic. But, with the very small amounts we inject, it can be used to weaken the muscles causing the spasm. Botulinum toxin made for treatment purposes is prepared using a blood product (human albumin). The blood used is screened for all known transmissible infections. But there is no absolute guarantee that the preparation is free from organisms which cannot be tested for, or have yet to be identified.

There is also a risk of droopy eyelids and double vision from having Botox injections around the eye. If this happens, it will get better over time as the effect of the injections wears off. This will happen in about 2 to 3 months.

What do the injections involve?

Most people have between 3 and 8 injections to each side. We place these just under the skin. You will feel a slight stinging. Where we do the injections and how much we inject is different for each patient. You should avoid wearing makeup on the day of injection.

The markings on the diagram below shows the common sites of injections.





What to expect after the procedure

If you bruise easily, you may get a bruise after the injection. This should fade in a few days.

It is normal to feel some discomfort during, and for a while after the injections.

You will not see any difference straight away after the Botox injections. It takes about 2 to 3 weeks for the full effect to be seen.

Avoid massaging or rubbing the treated areas for 48 hours after the injections. This will move the Botox around which reduces the effect. It may also increase the risk of double vision or a droopy eyelid.

We will arrange a telephone follow up appointment 3 to 4 weeks after the first injection to check on your progress. The effect of the injection slowly wears off and most people need repeated injection every 3 months.

If you drive, you must tell the DVLA that you have blepharospasm. We can give you a report confirming that your condition is controlled with Botulinum toxin injections, if the DVLA asks for one.

Contact details

If you have any questions please ask at your appointment, or you can contact the Oculoplastic Team at Leicester Royal Infirmary on **0116 204 7971**.

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