



Lowe Plastic Surgery (LPS)
Dr. Lowe's Facts about Botulinum Toxin

How do I get started?

It is important prior to any cosmetic procedure for patients to spend some time educating themselves about the pros and cons of treatment. Although patients who undergo Botulinum Toxin are typically happy, this elective procedure is not for everybody. The main risk of Botulinum Toxin application is pain, bleeding, swelling, and under-correction, over-correction, and diffusion. Read the educational materials provided and on our website including consent forms prior to your surgery. Make sure that your physician is Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery or the American Board of Dermatology. Please check out websites and links at: www.drjlowe.com

How does Botulinum Toxin work?

Clostridia botulina bacteria produce a class of chemical compounds known as “toxins”. The Botulinum Toxin is processed and purified to produce a sterile product suitable for specific therapeutic uses. Once the diluted toxin is injected, it produces a temporary paralysis of muscle by preventing transmission of nerve impulses. Since April 2002, Botulinum Toxin has been FDA-approved for cosmetic treatment of forehead wrinkles caused by specific muscle groups. Other areas of the face and body may be treated “off-label.” Botulinum toxin has also been used to treat migraines, colorectal disorders, excessive perspiration, and musculoskeletal disorders. Injections are customized for every patient, depending on clinical need. Botulinum toxin cannot stop the process of aging. It can however, temporarily diminish the look of wrinkles caused by muscles. Injections may be performed as a singular procedure or as an adjunct to others procedures.

Is there any difference in the different Toxin products on the market?

There are a number of Botulinum Toxins on the market. These products include but are not limited to BOTOX[®] (*Botulina* Toxin Type A, Allergan), XEOMIN[®] (IncobotulinumtoxinA, Merz), and DYSPORT[®] (*AbobotulinumtoxinA*, Medicis[®] Aesthetic Inc.). Each of these products when properly dosed and applied appears to be inter-changeable and equivalent regardless what each company may claim or advertise. If you have a preference on the name brand please let our physician and staff know. It is important to note, that the product you select may result in change in your per unit cost. Current medical research strongly supports the fact that the products used in this practice are equally effective regardless of the manufacture.

Am I a candidate for Botulinum Toxin?

Patients with localized facial wrinkles related to movement in the forehead, eyelid, and mouth region are usually the best candidates for Botulinum Toxin applications. It can be an excellent addition to any cosmetic procedure. Patients considering Botulinum Toxin need to decide if the risks are worth it or not? Botulinum Toxin last about 3 months and patients require re-treatment 4 times a year for consistent results. Botulinum Toxin is best suited for patients who are seeking a subtle non-permanent improvement in fine facial wrinkles related to muscle movement. Typical areas that Botulinum Toxin is injected include the forehead, cheeks, lips, and neck. Once the Botulinum Toxin is applied the full results take about one week, last several months, and then fade by 4 months. It is best for patients to avoid massaging injection sites for the first week. A frank discussion with a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist will help patients make the right decision about this procedure.

Is Botulinum Toxin covered by health insurance?

Botulinum Toxin used in our practice is by definition a cosmetic procedure. It is not covered by insurance when performed in our practice no matter the clinical indications. Some patients have problems with chronic migraines but a neurologist will need to inject Botulinum Toxin in those situations and submit the procedure to your insurance. Many patients undergoing Botulinum Toxin injections report that their chronic migraines are improved but that is only a secondary benefit in our practice. Botulinum Toxin is also utilized to treat excessive sweating and when applied in our practice it is cosmetic. Botulinum Toxin can be used to improve facial asymmetry related to trauma or paralysis, but it would still require a cosmetic

payment. Patients who are interested in Botulinum Toxin being covered by their insurance should go to a specialist recommended by their insurance that agrees to submit in that clinical situation. Many patients undergoing potentially medically covered procedures choose to pay for Botulinum Toxin with our experienced physicians to enhance the cosmetic outcome. Dr. Lowe will discuss these issues during the course of your cosmetic consultation and consent process.

Is Botulinum Toxin application painful?

There are a number of different ways to perform Botulinum Toxin. Most physicians performing Botulinum Toxin injection prefer patients to apply a topical numbing cream about an hour prior to application. The topical numbing cream or EMLA ensures some patient comfort. Isolated areas of injection may be performed without a topical block in most cases. In our practice Botulinum Toxin is applied with very small needles which are well tolerated during a quick application. The price of Botulinum Toxin is based primarily on the volume of product given and at times on the time and complexity of the procedure. Patients requiring less work and time are rewarded by a smaller fee. Patients rarely complain of significant pain following injection regardless of the location. A consultation with a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist, allows patients to determine the technique best suited for them.

What is the best place to get Botulinum Toxin?

There are a variety of products available to treat aging face or wrinkles. Most products are chosen based on the physician's expertise and experience. Botulinum Toxin treats forehead wrinkles and crow's feet quite well. It is usually best to undergo a conservative Botulinum Toxin application in the beginning. Later patients can venture out to explore the less obvious locations that might make them look younger or less harsh or mad. Wrinkles that are static are less likely to respond to Botulinum Toxin application. These wrinkles occur in older patients and are typically related to skin excess and soft tissue sagging. Deeper wrinkles may respond to soft tissue fillers that include: Juvederm, Radiesse, and human fat. Some patients may find that laser treatments or surgical procedures more effectively address their concerns. Whatever the clinical situation, almost all patients benefit for Botulinum Toxin. They also usually benefit from a medical skin regimen to decrease the signs of aging over time.

Is Botulinum Toxin all a big SCAM?

All cosmetic products have failed to be completely effective or predictable to date. Every year a technology or marketing tool is introduced, and every year many products are disproven. The problem with certain products is they sound good but are very expensive, and patients fail to see real results. If it sounds too good to be true, it is too good to be true. There are many technologies and products that hold promise now and in the future. It is hard enough to get consistent, lasting, and satisfactory results even with scientifically proven products. The best products depend on the patient's anatomy, preference, and willingness to compromise. We have been performing Botulinum Toxin for over 15 years and have found very few products to be as predictable and satisfying. Many patients combine injections with other procedures such as soft tissue fillers, laser resurfacing, intense pulse light (IPL), and surgery. A consultation with a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist can help patients choose the best option.

Do you think I will like Botulinum Toxin?

Botulinum toxin is a great way to treat patients who want cosmetic improvement to specific areas of the face and who are not considering surgery. If a patient undergoes Botulinum Toxin application which is temporary, it will go away over time and modifications can be made to the technique. In our practice, Dr. Lowe can usually determine the best application for each patient with feedback within 2-3 applications. We keep detailed records with injection maps so patients can achieve results that best fit their preferences and expectations. Patients who would like a more permanent result can undergo surgical procedures that can provide lasting results similar to Botulinum toxin. In many cases, the biggest risk of Botulinum Toxin application is that patients really like it and want to continue treatments forever. Botulinum Toxin is not popular by chance it really works in specific areas in patients ranging from 25-65 and more. Patients should talk to a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist to help determine what to expect before and after Botulinum Toxin application.

Will other people know I had Botulinum Toxin?

The results of Botulinum Toxin are usually subtle. Patients can look overdone without expression if the amount of Botulinum Toxin is particularly high. Dr. Lowe always tries to achieve a subtle improvement of youth with the smallest number of units. Botox is injected using extremely small needle with multiple injection sites. The injection sites are very small but bruising can occur. It is usually better to start small at your first treatment to make sure you like the results. The effects of Botulinum Toxin can be seen due to surgeon error, complications, bruising, or patient medication (i.e. Aspirin or Ibuprofen). The best way to avoid evidence of injection is to follow post-operative instructions, apply gentle pressure, and ice when possible. Patients require 3-4 treatments a year to see ideal results. Only a limited amount of Botox can be applied safely to any one area at a time. Patients should have a frank discussion with their plastic surgeon or dermatologist to help them make the right decision about their treatment regimen.

Does the effect of Botulinum Toxin last forever?

Sorry, it does not last forever. However, in patients who continue Botulinum Toxin applications, wrinkle prevention and a more youthful long term appearance is a reasonable expectation. The results of Botulinum Toxin are definitely temporary. Nevertheless, continued paralysis of muscle movement provides patients with biofeedback that actually teaches patients to avoid negative behavior. If a patient likes Botulinum Toxin in the forehead or eyelid region a brow lift or eyelid tuck may actually save money over time. In most cases, Botulinum Toxin is the best option for patients seeking a short term solution without surgery, risk, or substantial cost. It is noteworthy that Botulinum Toxin and other paralyzing agents on the market today provide a highly effective and predictable short term cosmetic result. Botulinum Toxin is by far the best and most reliable injectable agent on the market today, and significant improvements in these products are expected over the next decade.

Does Botulinum Toxin cost a lot?

The cost of Botulinum Toxin applications is based primarily on the amount of product injected. Patients are always encouraged to combine Botulinum Toxin with other nonsurgical or surgical procedures. The total cost of procedures is decreased when they are combined. Great results sometimes require multiple treatments or maintenance. Many patients will space injections out over time to fit into their schedule and budget. Future treatments are often less time consuming and can be performed with less anesthetic as patients become more familiar with the process. Patients can usually tell within a week if Botulinum Toxin is right for them. Most patients are very happy with the results.

Where and when should I have Botulinum Toxin?

An important decision for patients considering Botulinum Toxin is where and when. Botulinum Toxin is usually performed in our clinic with topical anesthetic. Some patients request sedation with medication by mouth but then will require a ride home. These procedures usually take 5 minutes to perform and patients are asked to ice for 5-10 minutes after application in most cases. Patients often will bruise or swell for 1-2 days after the procedure. Dr. Lowe performs injections himself and he gets Botulinum Toxin every 4-6 months to improve his wrinkles. Patients who want Botulinum Toxin on the same day as their first consultation are encouraged to review the consent forms prior to the consultation. If you have had it before and like it, just let Dr. Lowe know the amount and location when possible to ensure the best results.

What are the restrictions after Botulinum Toxin application?

The recovery from Botulinum Toxin is usually predictable and limited. Patients are asked to limit activity for 1-2 hours and ice the area for 5-10 minutes. Patients should avoid aspirin or NSAIDS (i.e. Advil, Ibuprofen, Aleve, etc.) for 5-7 days prior to application to decrease the risk of bruising. Patients will not see the full results of Botulinum Toxin for 7-10 days. Patients often report swelling, bruising, heaviness, and minor pain for 2-5 days after treatment.

What about patient safety?

There are safety concerns related to Botulinum Toxin. Many concerns are related to risk of adverse reactions to injection or to the Toxin itself. However, in most cases safety is most dependent on the individual doing the injection. Botulinum Toxin is an elective procedure reserved in for patients in good

health in a clinic setting. Drs. Jim Lowe and Julie Lowe are physician specialists, who perform real procedures, in a real medical clinic. As a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) or the American Academy of Dermatology both doctors are required to follow guidelines designed to ensure the best patient safety and outcomes. You can also always be assured in our practice that you will get fresh and uncontaminated product at the agreed upon dose in the appropriate location. For further information about safety and credentials go to: www.drjlowe.com

Should I wait and think about my options?

Cosmetic Botulinum Toxin injection is foremost a lifestyle decision. Although the procedure carries limited risks, the visible benefits can be subtle. Patients are able to see the clinical results within several days. Patient should choose a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist that they trust, takes time, reviews risks, and puts safety first. One of the most important aspects of the procedures is complete cosmetic care and follow-up. The biggest complaint from patients is that they did not get enough Botulinum Toxin or it did not last long enough. If a patient wants more Botulinum Toxin and it is indicated, patients should simply get and pay for more product. It is best for patients to follow standard dosing based on the physicians experience at your first application to ensure the best outcome at the best price. Botulinum Toxin is extremely popular because it really works and it is quite often the right thing for the right person.

What are Dr. Lowe's take home points?

1. Understand risks (bruising, swelling, asymmetry, and pain) and review the consent form.
2. The results from injection are quick, but bruising and swelling usually lasts for several days.
3. Topical numbing medication and small needles are key to comfort and success
4. You get what you pay for. If you want more Botulinum Toxin and it is indicated get more.
5. Botulinum Toxin last about 3-4 months. It is best to be conservative at the first applications.
6. Patients who like Botulinum Toxin often like fillers (i.e. Juvederm or Radiesse) or laser treatments.
7. Most patients with aging skin would also benefit from a medically prescribed skin program.
8. Have fun with Botulinum Toxin. Consider trying new or different applications over time.
9. Physician certification and safety matters. No one wants a bad outcome from a minor procedure.