



CosmeticDoctor.ie

Understanding BOTOX

When we talk about facial aesthetics and the prevention of signs of ageing, one of the most popular products is botox, trademarked by the company Allergan.

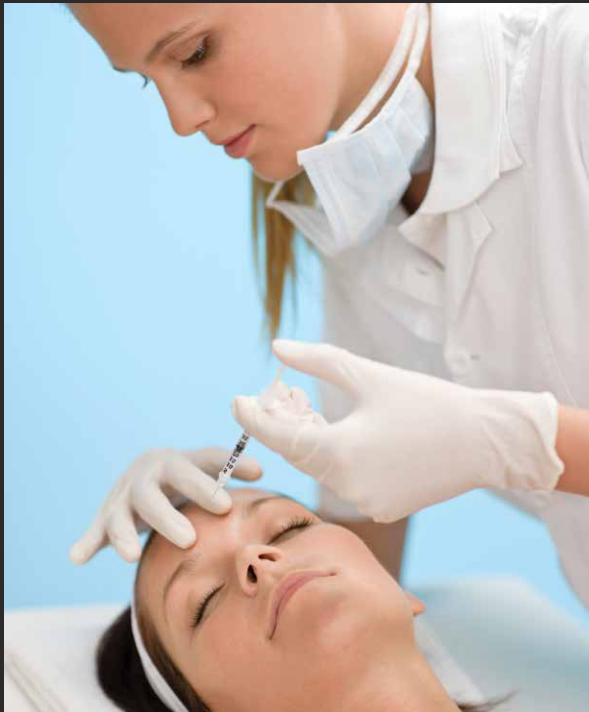
Dr. Lisa Fay and her team at Cosmetic Doctor have extensive experience in the use of anti-wrinkles injectables to achieve an aesthetically pleasing, natural result for the patient.

What is botox?

BOTOX® Cosmetic (onabotulinumtoxinA) is a prescription medicine; injected into specific muscles and used by medical professionals on patients who want to minimise the appearance of ageing.

Used to improve the look of moderate to severe frown lines between the eyebrows (glabellar lines) in people 18 to 65 years; BOTOX® Cosmetic is most commonly injected directly into the muscles between the brows.

It works by blocking nerve impulses to the injected muscles. This reduces muscle activity that causes moderate to severe lines to form between the brows.



Medical use of botox

BOTOX® is a drug made from a toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. It's been used by doctors for many years to treat a number of health problems, such as:

- Severe underarm sweating
- Cervical dystonia - a neurological disorder that causes severe neck and shoulder muscle contractions
- Blepharospasm - uncontrollable blinking
- Strabismus - misaligned eyes
- Chronic migraine
- Overactive bladder

Use of Botox for Wrinkles

One of the most popular uses of botox over the past decade has been for cosmetic purposes; it's for this purpose specifically that BOTOX® Cosmetic was developed by the same company, Allergan, who make BOTOX®.

It is effective for use on the glabellar lines – the vertical frown lines between the eyebrows, which often look like the number “11”. These frown lines are formed by repeated and involuntary contraction of the muscles between the eyebrows.

BOTOX® Cosmetic is used to help minimise the appearance of ageing by smoothing out ‘dynamic’ wrinkles on the face.

Dynamic wrinkles are those which appear whilst someone is making a facial expression, such as frowning, and then recede when the expression is finished.

Dynamic wrinkles tend to become static wrinkles over time; meaning they get deeper and deeper until they are visible on the face whether you are actively frowning or not.

As the skin becomes less elastic, excessive contraction of the ‘frown’ muscles may cause visible, deep wrinkles between the eyebrows to form, even when the face is relaxed.

Using an anti-wrinkle injectable helps not only to minimise the appearance of existing lines, but also helps prevent deeper ones from forming.

“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others”

Audrey Hepburn

Is botox safe?

After discovering the 'off-label' benefits of botox, meaning a use other than the one for which it was first intended, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) in the US and the UK re-evaluated and approved the drug for safe cosmetic use, with Allergan producing the product BOTOX® Cosmetic for this purpose.

This is common practice when certain medications are found to have beneficial effects on symptoms other than those they were intended to treat.

For example, the drug Viagra was initially developed for use in men with heart problems, before it was found to help increase libido and sexual function.

So too with botox-the cosmetic advantages and usage were examined and assessed to ensure the drug was safe and effective for use as an anti-wrinkle injectable, as well as the other medical applications listed above.

Much has been made of the fact that botox is the same toxin that causes a type of food poisoning called botulism- however the drug is used in minute quantities and is specially formulated in measures appropriate for use in the treatment of facial wrinkles.

As with all medications there is a risk of side-effects, which are listed further on in this article. Reaction to medication is subjective in every patient, so you should know what a normal reaction is and what may be a cause for concern.

How does botox work to smooth wrinkles?

Botox injections work by blocking the signal from specific nerves in the face to certain tiny facial muscles, such as the glabellar muscles in the forehead.

This causes the muscle to be weakened or temporarily paralyzed just enough to allow the muscle to relax.

Once the muscle that is responsible for causing the frown lines relaxes under the skin, the wrinkle it made whilst pulling the surface of the skin is released.



The introduction of botox for the treatment of wrinkles, particularly the 'frown lines' between the brows (glabellar lines) marked a real revolution in aesthetic medicine.

It allows cosmetic doctors to treat patients in a non-invasive way for facial rejuvenation and sculpting.

It's extremely important to attend a qualified doctor with experience in cosmetic procedures, as treatment of the glabellar area – as well as other treatable areas of the face - requires a thorough understanding of facial anatomy and the interaction of adjacent muscle groups.

Will I look frozen?

No. One of the reasons it's so important to have botox administered by a doctor with experience of the drug and comprehensive understanding of the facial musculature, is that it should be tailored for use on each individual face.

It's too large a dose, or too frequent an administration, that can cause that 'frozen' look where facial expression is compromised.

Although botox can be used in a number of treatable areas of the face; on its own or in conjunction with dermal fillers; the muscles underlying the glabella are among the larger muscles commonly treated with botox, so they may require a higher dose than other facial sites.

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Men, for example, typically have a greater glabellar muscle mass than women and require larger doses.

Also, it will depend on the nature of the wrinkle created when you frown, which is why Dr. Fay will also request you to frown before she administers the injection.

This is to ensure optimal outcomes and achieve the most natural looking result for you. She has to account for individual variation in muscle mass, anatomy, and function in order to determine the proper dose, number, and location of injections.



What age should I start to use botox?

Taking good care of your skin by preventing sun damage while you're young is important in the prevention of wrinkles; as is wearing sunscreen daily and ensuring the practice of a good skincare routine; however basic it may be.

The age at which people notice frown lines or other wrinkles on their face varies, but pale Celtic skin is particularly vulnerable.

The rationale for starting Botox early is the prevention of the permanent development of deep, inset wrinkles.

Statistically, the average woman begins to show signs of facial aging around the age of 25. The first signs of aging in women are fine lines around the eyes (crow's feet) and around the mouth, as well the "elevens" – the frown lines between the brows in the glabella.

This is because women's facial skin is thinner than men. Men have thicker skin and an increased blood supply to the skin of the face which is necessary to support the growth of thick facial hair.

For this reason men tend to start using botox later in life; around their mid-thirties. When men age, the wrinkles tend to be larger and thicker furrows develop, so the strategic use of botox can be beneficial for both men and women.

As botox can have a preventative effect, it's best not to wait until your wrinkles are deeply etched on the face and then expect an overnight miracle!

Make an appointment and simply ask if botox is suitable for you.

How long does botox last for?

It can vary by patient, but most people find it lasts between four and six months. It can take up to a week after the injections to see results – some people see a difference in a couple of days.

All patients respond differently, although for everyone the muscle action gradually returns; the lines and wrinkles begin to re-appear and wrinkles need to be re-treated.

The lines and wrinkles often appear less severe with time because the muscles are being trained to relax.

Can botox be used on other areas of the face?

Yes. The highly purified toxin can be used on its own or in tandem with other products, such as dermal fillers, to help temporarily reduce or erase horizontal forehead lines and crow's feet (tiny wrinkles radiating outwards from the sides of the eyes).

The injections slow muscles that otherwise would contract hundreds of times a day, eventually etching lines in the skin.

Botox can also lift the corners of the mouth that sag with age, smooth out the "pin cushion" look in some chins, soften smoker's lines around the mouth, and soften vertical neck cords.

Botox approved for use on 'Crow's Feet'

In September 2013, botox was officially approved to treat the network of fine lines radiating outward from the corners of the eyes; more commonly known as 'crow's feet'.

Although many doctors say they have been using this treatment for some time, the specific treatment for crow's feet was sanctioned by the Food and Drug Administration last September.

Crow's feet are thought to be caused by repeated muscle contractions over a lifetime through facial expressions like frowning, smiling and squinting.

'This additional indication will provide people with a new FDA approved treatment option for those seeking a smoother appearance by temporarily minimising the appearance of crow's feet at the sides of the eyes,' said Susan Walker, director of the Division of Dermatology and Dental Products in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, in the FDA statement.



Use of botox with other products

Botox is sometimes used to help extend the life of dermal fillers and improve the overall effect. As a dermal filler quite literally 'fills' a deep crease, botox can be injected to help release that crease by relaxing the underlying muscle.

Fillers are used for static wrinkles, and the reason those wrinkles formed in the first place is the muscle movement underneath the skin.

Most people have a baseline muscle tension or contraction that they are not aware of that makes them 'frown'. Filler is useful to diminish the appearance of deep creases, and use of botox will keep it from coming back more quickly.

"I'm a big believer in that if you focus on good skin care, you really won't need a lot of makeup"

Demi Moore




Dr. Fay will assess each patient comprehensively to examine the symmetry; lines and specific musculature of each face, and will use a combination appropriate for the most natural looking result.

Potential Side Effects

BOTOX® (onabotulinumtoxinA) may cause side effects in rare cases, and if you exhibit any of the following after treatment you must call your doctor or seek medical help.

Remember that the form of toxin used for a cosmetic purpose is highly purified is safest when used properly by an experienced medical professional.

It's important to give Dr. Fay and the team at Cosmetic Doctor an accurate medical history before embarking on any treatment plan.

-  *Problems swallowing, speaking, or breathing, due to weakening of associated muscles.*
-  *Allergic reactions have been reported including itching, rash, red itchy welts, wheezing, asthma symptoms, or dizziness.*
-  *Botox is not recommended for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.*

It's important whilst giving a medical history at Cosmetic Doctor to also inform Dr. Fay about any and all medication you are taking. For example, medications which thin the blood, such as aspirin, will increase the chance of developing a bruise at the site of the injection.

How to Contact Cosmetic Doctor to find out more about botox

If you would like to discover what botox can do to minimise the appearance of ageing, make an appointment with Dr. Lisa Fay at Cosmetic Doctor by calling **01 2000 500** or see the Cosmetic Doctor website, where you can read more information about the procedure and book an appointment online at www.cosmeticdoctor.ie

