

Botulinum Injection (Botox®, Xeomin®)

What is Botulinum?

Botulinum is a substance produced by bacteria that blocks the signal ability for muscles to contract. As such, it has several medical/therapeutic uses, including migraine and muscle spasticity management.

Two commonly used types of botulinum toxin are OnabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®) and incobotulinumtoxinA (Xeomin®).

Botulinum is used frequently in the medical world is for migraines as well as spasticity, which is a type of stiffness in the neck, upper limbs, and lower limbs. The drugs can also be used for bruxism, or night time teeth grinding. In the cosmetic world, botulinum has been used for wrinkle treatment and prevention.



Image source: [American Migraine Foundation](#).

What is Botulinum Injection?

Botulinum injection is an intramuscular injection, which means injection of a very small needle into the muscle. The procedure can be done in the office, and there is little to no down time after the procedure. The medicine does wear off, however, and thus most patients prefer to have their shots scheduled every 12 weeks. Results become noticeable after 3-5 days.

- For migraine, there will be 31 shots in all at the front of the head, sides of the head, neck, and upper neck/shoulders.
- For spasticity, it will be dependent on the site and extent of spasticity involved.
- For bruxism, the injections will go to the sides of the jaw and the side of the head

Because Botox is FDA approved for chronic migraine and spasticity, it's covered by most plans, including Medicare and Medicaid. In addition, Allergan offers a "Botox Savings Card," which offers patients reduced fees.

Possible Risks and Complications

In general, botulinum injections are considered to be very safe. However, as with any minor medical procedure, there are potential risks associated with the procedure. These include the possibility of an allergic reaction, swelling, bleeding, infection, discoloration of the overlying skin. There may also be pain, bleeding, or bruising at the site of needle entry. In some cases, there may be no improvement of your pain.

With botulinum toxin injections for migraine, some people may have partial facial paralysis or asymmetrical muscle weakness. When injecting into the jaw for bruxism, loss of muscle function can result in a reduction of power to chew hard foods. Injection into the muscle for spasticity will weaken muscles in that region.