

Laryngeal (Vocal Cord) Botox®

What is laryngeal Botox®?

Laryngeal Botox® is a procedure where **botulinum toxin (Botox®)** is injected into the vocal cords to treat the vocal cord muscles affected by **neurologic** (nervous system) problems of the **larynx** (voice box).

- Botox® is injected into the affected muscles by direct or **electromyographic (EMG) guidance**. We use an EMG-guided approach (which looks at electrical signals between muscles) to figure out the best place for the injection. In some cases, we may also use a scope-guided approach.

What conditions are treated with laryngeal Botox®?

We use Botox® to treat many neurologic disorders of the larynx, including:

- Spasmodic dysphonia and other laryngeal dystonias (involuntary movements of the vocal cords)
- Vocal tremor
- Chronic cough
- Vocal tics with Tourette syndrome
- Laryngospasm or paradoxical vocal fold motion disorder (PVFM)
- Bilateral vocal cord paralysis

What should I expect during my laryngeal Botox® appointment?

- We will take you back to one of our clinic rooms, and you'll sit in the clinic chair in a slightly reclined position.
- We will clean the skin of your neck with an alcohol swab and then inject a small amount of numbing medication into the skin. (This may sting for a moment.)

- We will inject numbing medication into your windpipe. This will make you cough, but it will numb the inner surfaces of your throat so that the rest of the procedure is more comfortable. (For most people, this is the most uncomfortable part of the whole process.)
 - Occasionally, we may need to place numbing medication in your nose and a flexible scope (camera) in your throat so we can see that the needle is going to the correct location for the Botox® injection.
- You will hear noises coming from the EMG machine as your doctor guides the needle to the correct location.
- Our audiologist will put several stickers on your neck. The doctor will then do the Botox® injection. They will ask you to breathe quietly and avoid talking or swallowing unless instructed to do so.
- Most Botox® injections take just a few minutes.

What should I expect right after my laryngeal Botox® appointment?

- You may not notice any difference except a numb feeling in throat right after the injection. The numbness should only last 1-2 hours.
- Do not eat or drink anything until the numbness goes away.
- If you did not take any medication for anxiety before the injection, you may drive yourself home from your appointment.

What should I expect in the days and weeks after my laryngeal Botox® appointment?

In the several days after your injection, the Botox® will start to take effect. You may experience the following things:

- Your voice will become "breathy" or weak.

- You may notice a choking sensation when swallowing, especially when swallowing liquids. This is normal.
 - It is helpful to take small sips of liquids and small bites of food. For liquids, you can also try taking small, single sips through a straw. Tuck your chin toward your chest when swallowing to reduce choking.
- Over several weeks, your voice will become stronger. Many patients describe a “golden period” lasting several months after their injection.

Your doctor may ask you to have a follow-up appointment after your first injection to make sure it has worked well for you. This may be an in-person visit or a virtual visit around 4-6 weeks after your injection.

Will I need more Botox® injections in the future?

Over time, your voice will most likely develop symptoms of your voice disorder again. Once this happens, you can have another Botox® injection. How often you have injections will be based on how your voice responds to Botox® and your voice needs. On average, injections are repeated every 3-6-months. We will work with you to set up your personalized treatment plan, including the dosage and timing of your injections. Our goals include:

- Maximizing your “golden period”
- Maximizing your **Voice-Related Quality of Life (V-RQOL)**
- Limiting the bad side effects of Botox® you experience

What are the risks of laryngeal Botox®?

- It is possible that Botox® may not help your symptoms, or that your dosage will need to be adjusted over time to balance the good and bad effects of the treatment.

- You may have minor bruising or bleeding at the injection site. You should not get Botox® if you are pregnant, if you may become pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding.

Can I get laryngeal Botox® if I have a cold or laryngitis?

Yes, we can still treat you with Botox® if you have a cold or laryngitis.

Who should I call if I have questions?

- If you have questions or concerns about your Botox® injection, please call the nurse at (734) 615-6481.
- When you need to schedule your next injection, please call the specialty scheduler at (734) 763-9965.

If you have general questions or concerns after your procedure, please call the Otolaryngology Clinic nurses at (734) 936-8027 Monday through Friday between 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM. Please hold non-urgent questions for the next business day.

- If you have urgent questions or concerns on weekends, holidays, or after business hours, please call (734) 936-6267 and ask the operator to page the Otolaryngology resident on call.

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