

Botox® A Injections for Urinary Incontinence

What is Botox A?

Botox® injections are a procedure that can be used to treat severe bladder symptoms, such as severe urgency, inability to delay urination, and urinary sphincter spasm. It works by blocking the ability of some nerves to communicate with bladder or sphincter muscles. It is used by several medical specialties, including Urology, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, Plastic Surgery, and Colorectal Surgery to treat medical conditions that are not responsive to medications or other conservative therapies.

How can Botox® be used to treat urinary incontinence?

In some situations, urinary incontinence does not respond to medications and behavioral therapy. When treating patients with Botox for urinary incontinence, the surgeon uses a small telescope called a cystoscope to look inside the bladder and injects 100 – 300 units of Botox into the bladder wall. It takes approximately 20 minutes for the surgeon to complete the injections. The procedure may be performed under local or general anesthesia, depending on the surgeon's decision. It is considered an outpatient procedure, meaning that there is no expected hospitalization afterwards.

What are the expectations?

Botox takes approximately 7 days to work after the procedure. Our goal is to see a 50% improvement in urinary symptoms after the injections – for example: longer intervals of holding urine, less nighttime urination, less incontinence. **It is rare that all symptoms will resolve.** Botox treatments usually last between 3 and 9 months before the symptoms return. The procedure may be repeated when the symptoms return.

What does “off label” use mean?

At this time, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) does not recognize Botox® as a medication approved for treating some bladder symptoms that are not related to neurogenic bladder. Consequently, Botox® treatments for urinary symptoms which are not related to a spinal cord injury or multiple sclerosis are considered “off label” uses for the medication. **There are numerous scientific studies in the urology literature supporting the safety and efficacy of Botox® for treating urinary symptoms.** The FDA is currently evaluating Botox as a treatment for many types of urinary symptoms and we expect the FDA to remove the “off label” designation.

Patients who choose Botox treatments for non-neurogenic related urinary symptoms must give the treating physician consent to use Botox for this “off-label” usage.

What are the risks?

Even though no incision is made Botox® injections are considered an invasive therapy. Risks associated with Botox injections include, but are not limited to: urinary tract infections, blood in the urine, damage to the bladder, injury to the bowels.

Side effects of the treatment post injection include temporary urinary urgency and pain with urination. Up to 25% of patients will also experience urinary retention, which means the bladder cannot empty completely on its own. If this occurs, it may require the patient to start intermittent catheterization or temporary catheter placement until the bladder regains strength.

Absorption of Botox into the bloodstream has also been reported to very rarely occur. If this occurs, the patient may experience numbness or loss of sensation

in a remote body part. Other (rare) reported complications are shortness of breath and memory loss.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact the University of Michigan, Department of Urology at 734-936-7030 during working hours (8:00 am – 5:00 pm). If there are any concerns that need to be addressed after business hours or on weekends, please call 734-936-6267 and ask to speak with the Urology Resident on Call. If you need to be evaluated by a physician on an emergent basis, please go to the nearest ER and have the ER physician contact the University of Michigan urology resident on call for assistance.

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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