



## Learn 9 Things To Know Before Getting Botox

### Description

While buzzy chemicals, tricked-out lotions and potions, and new-age technologies with miraculous claims emerge every month, there are a few tried-and-true workhorses that outlast fads. Daily sunscreen and nightly retinol use are two such stalwarts (I've mastered the former but have yet to master the latter), as are neurotoxic injections.

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Since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Allergan's Botox® in April 2002 for the temporary improvement of moderate to severe glabellar lines (i.e., the frown lines between the brows), it has become the go-to treatment for anyone looking to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles caused by facial expressions (think: frowning, squinting, smiling, and the like).

Throughout the pre-and post-procedure process, I was most impressed by how many people indicated they couldn't wait to hear about my experience since they had considered having Botox® but weren't sure where to begin or what to anticipate. So, with their interest in mind, I've developed a list of the nine things I believe are most important to know before getting your first tattoo:

## **1. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG TIMES TO BEGIN.**

While it may appear that people are opting for Botox® and other similar treatments at a younger age, there is no right or wrong time to begin treatment. No one needs Botox®, as Dr. Rabach told me at my first appointment (or any cosmetic procedure for that matter). But on the other hand, Neurotoxin injections can be preventative if you are interested and in a position to begin early.

Patients in their twenties and thirties will, of course, require less product than those in their forties and fifties, but everyone will notice effects. “Patients who already have lines require more units to reduce movement and frequently require adjunct procedures such as peels, fillers, and microneedling to erase the lines that are etched in,” Dr. Rabach explains. “A person in their twenties may use a fraction of the number of units to keep their skin looking young.”

## **2. FIRST-TIME CONSULTATION IS ESSENTIAL**

As with any surgery, selecting a practitioner that makes you feel at ease and, in this situation, suits your aesthetic is critical. Booking a consultation with a board-certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist will allow you to get a taste of their work and bedside manner — and ensure that any procedure you desire to undergo is appropriate for you.

During my consultation, Dr. Rabach analyzed my face and asked me where I thought I needed Botox®. She proceeded to have me raise my brows (my go-to facial expression), wrinkle my brow, and squint after I mentioned the increasingly pervasive nature of my forehead lines. This enabled her to gain a better understanding of my facial anatomy.

## **3. YOU CAN COMPLETE IT DURING YOUR LUNCH BREAK.**

Kelly, the patient coordinator at LM Medical, informed me that, aside from “does it hurt?” the most typical question she hears from patients is “can I receive Botox® during my lunch break?” The simple answer is yes.

My first appointment (which included consultation and injections) lasted approximately an hour. However, most of that time was spent filling out new-patient paperwork, having ‘before’ photos taken, and talking with Dr. Rabach. The injections took less than ten minutes. After the operation, I cooled my forehead for five minutes to reduce swelling and bruising before returning to work. Of course, no one would have known if I hadn’t notified my coworkers where I was going.

Dr. Rabach cleansed my brow with an alcohol pad to remove my makeup before injecting it. She said I might reapply beauty goods (makeup and skincare) right after, so bring a touchup kit.

## **4. BE CONCERNED ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS AND ALLERGIES**

According to Dr. Rabach, Botox® is “extremely well-accepted” by the vast majority of the population for cosmetic and therapeutic purposes; nevertheless, disorders such as Lambert-Eaton Syndrome,

Myasthenia Gravis, ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), and a few others are contraindicated. In addition, allergies and medications should also be examined.

While your regular supplement regimen will not prevent you from getting injected, it may help you recover. "There are some supplements that may thin the blood, increasing the likelihood of bruising — which is not very common but can occur on occasion," she explains. "As a result, we explicitly inquire about supplements." Next, of course, we ask about medications, but we've discovered that most patients don't consider supplements to be meds. We prefer to be thoroughly aware of our patients' particular backgrounds to set expectations."

Although there are no pharmaceutical contraindications to having Botox®, aspirin, and supplements such as fish oil, ginseng, garlic, and ginkgo Biloba (to name a few) can increase a patient's risk of bleeding, hence, bruising. Lay off them before coming in for your appointment for the most frictionless encounter.

## **5. EXERCISE BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT**

You may or may not be aware that Botox® arrives in powder form at your provider's office, where it is combined with saline and chilled before injection. Because the combined formula is liquid, there is a theoretical possibility that the solution will spread or migrate away from the intended area.

Dr. Rabach urged me not to exercise for the rest of the day and to try to keep upright (read: not lie down or bend over) for three hours after my 2 p.m. treatment — but the advice was given out of caution. "When Botox® is blended according to the manufacturer's specifications, as is done in my practice, [movement] is quite unusual." "However, we are noticing an increase in the number of facilities that dilute the Botox® too much," she explains. "This may make it more dangerous for the patient to lay down or exercise." We advocate not laying down or exercising at LM Medical since we are extra cautious, but it stays where we want it."

## **6. A VIBRATOR COULD BE INVOLVED.**

That type of vibrator, yes. Dr. Rabach told me at my appointment that one of her early mentors advised her to buy them in bulk from Amazon for the best pricing... and results. Cosmo has explored the subject extensively, but the vibrator serves a very beneficial role in all honesty.

"We have a lattice of very superficial sensory nerves that feel anything that touches the skin," Dr. Rabach adds. "Using vibration during injection confuses the sensory nerves in the surrounding area into not 'knowing' exactly where the needle is coming and, as a result, dramatically reduces discomfort." "Sometimes, you don't even feel it!"

Dr. Rabach pressed the vibrator against the side of my brow, encouraged me to create facial movements, and injected into the lines that formed. I didn't feel anything, which could be due to the vibrator or because they use the tiniest needles on the market for the treatment. While I've been told I have high pain tolerance, I doubt anyone would describe the injections as much more than a pinprick.

My eyes teared up somewhat because they were naturally watery, and there was a small amount of

blood leftover that she hastily wiped away. There were little insect bite-like lumps at each injection site immediately after the treatment. She gave me an ice pack to place on my brow for five minutes and claimed the swelling would disappear in 15 to 20 minutes. As promised, there was no trace that I had done anything by the time I returned to my work.

I felt like I had a pretty mild headache for the rest of the day. For the first 48 hours or so, my forehead felt a bit painful to the touch (similar to how your arm feels after a vaccine), but I only noticed it when I washed my face and massaged the region.

## **7. DO NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE RESULTS**

Given our culture's obsession with rapid gratification, it's critical to recognize that Botox® results take time. In fact, during the first three or four days, you'll be questioning if your doctor did anything at all. However, by the fifth day, you'll be wondering why you didn't do this sooner. Finally, you'll feel the full effect of your shots two weeks after treatment.

On day five, I was at home with my family for Thanksgiving, and the fact that I had Botox® had almost completely escaped my memory until my mother inquired if I had noticed any changes. When I looked in the mirror, I noticed that the little wrinkles that had begun to form over my brows had softened – nearly to the point of invisibility. And when I raised my brows (yes, they still moved! ), my forehead couldn't constrict like it used to. Furthermore, I found it difficult to furrow my brow (albeit, as previously stated, I am more of a brow raiser than a furrower); thus, my eleven lines had been bid farewell for the time being. I'm frozen but don't appear to be. My makeup lasts longer without creases on my forehead, and I generally look more rejuvenated (whether I get enough sleep or not!).

## **8. YOU WILL REQUIRE A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT.**

Not all muscles are made equal, as Dr. Rabach emphasized during my initial appointment. As a result, one side of your face may be stronger than the other, implying that one side may require somewhat more treatment than the other – though this may be difficult for your physician to determine during your initial consultation.

To ensure that your injections are appropriate for your facial structure, they will likely have you return a week later (once the results have begun to show) to see if a touchup is required. I didn't require another needle, but the fast appointment allowed me to have my 'after' images were taken and ask Dr. Rabach other questions, most notably when I should return for more because, in case you haven't heard, Botox® isn't permanent...

## **9. THE OUTCOMES ARE TEMPORARY**

No matter which neurotoxic you take, the effects are not immediate and do not endure indefinitely. Most patients will find that injections last three to four months, depending on the amount administered and how your body processes it, at which point it will be time for another treatment. "Botox® degrades over time and must be repeated," adds Dr. Rabach. "Individual results vary depending on each person, their metabolism, the number of units received, and other things."

And don't bother asking what you can do to extend its life. "I've heard of it was lasting longer than four months on occasion," she says, "but the industry standard is three to four months for the majority of people." "There isn't much we can do to extend its life."

## The Bottom Line

As you can probably guess, I am quite pleased with my Botox® results and want to have treatments twice or three times a year in the future. That being said, I went into my visit with a few reservations and many questions, all of which my doctor was able to answer. So, if you only remember one thing from this essay, make it this: picking the appropriate provider is critical.

### Category

1. Lifestyle

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