

Botulinum Toxin A treatment for sialorrhoea (salivary drooling) in Parkinson's disease

Information for patients

What is “Botulinum Toxin”?

Botulinum Toxin is a potent neurotoxin. However, when it is used in very small quantities it can help relax tensed muscles and glands, and reduce excessive glandular secretions, such as saliva.

What is Botulinum Toxin used for?

Botulinum toxin is used for lots of different reasons.

In your case, you are having an injection of botulinum neuro toxin type A (**Xeomin**), (a specific type of Botox) to help alleviate sialorrhoea which is excessive salivation and drooling. Sialorrhoea is a symptom relating to your Parkinsons disease.

Botulinum neuro toxin type A (Xeomin) is licensed and indicated for use in this condition.

Botulinum neuro toxin type A (Xeomin) is usually used for salivary drooling when all other treatments have been considered and tried, and found not to be effective.

Other treatments or approaches to sialorrhoea may include having input from the speech and language therapy team. Other simple things like chewing gum, sucking boiled sweets, or acidic drinks are worth trying.

Medication known as ‘anticholinergics’ are sometimes prescribed as they can cause a dry mouth as a side effect. ‘Anticholinergic medications’ can be in the form of eye drops (used in the mouth) inhalers, (usually used for chest conditions), tablets or patches. However, not everyone can tolerate these treatments and the clinicians responsible for overseeing your care will have helped decide which approach is best in your case.

How does it work?

Acetylcholine is a chemical messenger produced in our nerves to stimulate the muscles to contract. When Botulinum Toxin is injected into a muscle or gland, the toxin moves into the nerves supplying that muscle or gland and reduces the release of acetylcholine. This helps your muscle or gland to relax. In relaxing your salivary glands the amount of saliva you produce is reduced.

Does it hurt?

You may experience a little pain temporarily at the site of the injection. You may sometimes get a small bruise at the site of the injection.

How long does it last?

Botulinum Toxin starts to work around 2-10 days after injection, reaching its peak effect after about 2 weeks. Generally its relaxing effect on the salivary gland lasts for up to 4 months. Once the effect has worn off you may need another injection. It is not recommended to repeat the injection any more than every 16 weeks. Sometimes the effect can wear off if it has been used several times.

What side effects might I experience?

Usually Botulinum toxin is used without any complications or side effects. A very small dose of toxin is used for salivary drooling which is highly unlikely to cause any issues. Occasionally people describe over dryness of the mouth following a Botox injection. In a very small number of cases (0.05%) it can affect the ability to swallow. If this occurs, then this may require a hospital admission, and even consideration of whether a feeding tube needs to be inserted, until the Botox wears off.

What do I do if I get side effects?

Minor side effects will settle by themselves. If you are experiencing dryness of the mouth, then you should stop taking any other medication (like eye drops, inhalers tablets or patches) that you were using to help your salivary drooling before the injection. If it continues, try using artificial saliva which can be bought from a chemist or prescribed via your GP. If you are having swallowing difficulties, then please contact the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist helpline number which is **0131 465 9156**.