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AESTHETIC SURGERY

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Botulinum Toxin A (BTA) Overview & Guide to Care Includes Botox, Dysport, and Xeomin

Introduction

This procedure is performed to improve frowns and wrinkles on your face. The information below tells you what to expect and explains recovery as well as instructions on care for after the procedure. Some of the information in the booklet may not apply to you.

BTA Injections

You have chosen to undergo a BTA injection to achieve an overall sense of subjective harmony, where your inner self will now truly be reflected by your outer appearance. Dr. Gutowski and his staff will do everything possible to make your experience as smooth as possible. The goal of BTA treatment is to improve the look of your skin by reducing the amount of wrinkling, which will lead to a more youthful and refreshed appearance.

Differences Between BTA and Fillers

Both of these injectable treatments are aimed at reducing the visibility of wrinkles in the face. However, they work differently to achieve this result. Wrinkles in the skin may be caused from the natural aging process and loss of collagen and structure in the skin, or they may be caused by muscle actions underneath the skin. Fillers work to fill in the wrinkles that are on your face all the time, whether you are moving your face or not. BTA on the other hand, works to decrease the muscle actions underneath the skin, thereby reducing the amount of wrinkling. Fillers may also be used to add volume and fullness to the face, whereas BTA cannot do this. Both injectable products have valuable uses and just need to be used accordingly. You may even require use of both products to optimally correct your problem.

What to Expect Before and During Your Procedure

Dr. Gutowski will examine your face and discuss the plan with you. We may have to remove some of your make-up in preparation for the procedure, but you can reapply your make-up in our office once the procedure is completed. During the procedure, you may feel some pain from the injections, but it is generally a light pain. Patients uniformly tolerate these injections quite well. Expect the procedure to last 5 to 10 minutes depending on how many areas of your face are being treated. It is possible to have some bruising following BTA injections, though uncommon. We will do everything we can to prevent this from happening. You will be instructed on holding cold compresses on your face following the procedure in order to minimize swelling and prevent bruising. You may even start this immediately in our office if you choose.

What to Expect After BTA Injections

It takes approximately 4-5 days to start seeing the results of BTA so be patient. You should notice an improvement in your wrinkles and facial appearance by the end of the first week. If you haven't noticed a correction by 2 weeks, be sure to contact Dr. Gutowski for further evaluation. Though uncommon, you may require a touch-up after the second or third week. You may have some redness of the skin around the injection sites for the first day – this is not an allergic reaction. You may also notice some very slight swelling that will subside by the first day or two. Though uncommon, you may have a small amount of bleeding from the injection sites and may develop bruising. If you notice either of these, hold pressure for fifteen minutes and apply cold compresses for a few minutes.

Bruising, if present, should not last beyond a week and usually resolves within a few days. In the vast majority of cases, you will leave the office with no changes in the skin whatsoever and without side effects. So rest easy and relish in your refreshed facial appearance as the Botox, Dysport, or Xeomin begins to work!

Remember that BTA injections are not permanent – they will need to be repeated in order to keep the wrinkles away and maintain your appearance. But the effects generally last 3 to 4 months.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long does BTA last?

It generally takes 4 to 5 before you begin to see the effects of your BTA treatment and the effects will generally last between 3 to 4 months.

Is BTA safe?

BTA is very well tolerated and safe when used for cosmetic surgery. There have been reports of problems after BTA treatment, but these have been cases where large doses of BTA were used. (The amount of BTA used for cosmetic purposes is very small. While BTA does “paralyze” the muscles in the face, the effects are temporary and do not lead to permanent problems.

Where should I use BTA

BTA can be used to treat any wrinkle in the face caused by the muscle actions under the skin. The most common places targeted include the forehead, glabella (“elevens”), around the eyes, and lip lines. It can also be used to raise the eyebrows, raise the corners of the mouth (to make it look like you have more of a smile instead of a frown), and soften the “bands” in your neck. Your surgeon will evaluate your face with you to develop a treatment plan that is right for you.

What if I don't like the results of my BTA treatment?

Though BTA treatments require repeated applications and are considered temporary, this is an advantage in the rare event that you are dissatisfied with your new look. The effects of BTA generally last 3 to 4 months and will wear off.

I've read the term “off-label.” What does that mean?

When injectable products are approved to be used in the United States, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lists specific uses those products. Most injectable products are “approved” to treat specific areas of the face, and lists these approved treatment areas on the product label. However, the principle effects of the product may be the same if used elsewhere on the face. When a product is used on an area of the face not specifically listed on the FDA package insert label, the use of the product is considered “off-label.” For example, Botox® may only be FDA approved to treat the wrinkles in the glabella area (“elevens”), resulting in a elimination or softening of those wrinkle and improved facial appearance. However, injection of this same material around the eyes may achieve the same cosmetic effect, but has not been officially approved by the FDA for that purpose. It is acceptable for physicians to use products in an off-label manner in the United States, but you need to be informed and aware that the products are being used in this way.