

Botulinum toxin

Information for patients, parents, guardians and carers



What is Botulinum toxin (Botox)?

Botox is made by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. In tiny amounts it is used to relax muscles and decrease muscle spasticity. The type of Botox used at King's Mill Hospital is BOTOX® made by Allergan UK.

How Botox works?

It works by partially blocking the nerve impulses to any muscles that have been injected and reduces excessive contractions of these muscles. The injections are usually performed while the child or young person is asleep under a short general anaesthetic. This allows the nerve stimulator to be used to ensure the correct muscles are being injected. It also allows the child or young person to be reviewed under anaesthetic to make a further assessment of their range of movement.

Following Botox treatment it is extremely important to complete regular physiotherapy exercises as advised. The Botox treatment does not work effectively or provide lasting results without doing the associated physiotherapy exercises.

What is Botulinum toxin used for?

It is used to treat spasticity in muscles. Spasticity can make muscles tight and difficult to move. Spasticity is a symptom of several neurological conditions including cerebral palsy. It is hoped that the injections will help reduce the tightness in the muscles making it easier to move the joints affected. This can make it easier to wear splints, do activities and exercises or move legs when performing a child or young person's care needs.

Before the injections happen

The child or young person will be seen in the pre-injection clinic to review their current range of movement and function. This allows the team to identify what issues the muscle spasticity is currently causing for the child or young person and set goals with them and their family on what they want to achieve from the Botox treatment.

On the day of the injections

The child or young person will arrive on ward 25 as advised at pre-injection review. Before the injections take place they will see the anaesthetist to check they are well enough for the anaesthetic.

They will also see the team doing the injections to confirm the injections needed. The ward staff will ensure they are cared for before and after the injections; usually children or young people stay on the ward for at least two hours after the injections to make sure they are well after the anaesthetic.

You will be seen by a member of the therapy team after the injections to make sure you are aware of the physiotherapy exercises needed to ensure the Botox treatment is effective.

After the injections

Therapy exercises are extremely important following the injections to get the best results from the injections.

The child should see their community physiotherapist and occupational therapist as required to review and progress their therapy treatment as able.

They may also need to see their orthotist to optimise their splints, as the Botox treatment may help achieve a better position in these.

The child or young person will be reviewed at eight weeks after the injections in the post-injection clinic, to see how effective the botulinum toxin treatment has been. This will be reported to the child's medical team. If the treatment has been effective and the child starts to have further issues with muscle tightness, they can be considered for further treatment if it has been helpful previously.

Risks associated with botox treatment

Like all treatments there are risks and side effects associated with having Botox injections:

- Botox treatment can cause flu like symptoms; it may make the child or young person feel drowsy or have pain in their extremities.
- The Botox injections can cause bruising and soreness at the injection site and in the muscle or muscle group injected; this should reduce within a few days.
- Performing the Botox injections carries the risk of damaging the surrounding vessels or nerves in the tissue injected - the injections will be performed by an appropriately trained professional to minimise this risk.
- Botox treatment reduces the spasticity (tightness) in the muscles and therefore makes them weaker, which can affect how the child or young person walks making them more at risk of falls.

- The Botox treatment may be less effective than expected and the child or young person's muscles may remain tight; this will be identified at the post-Botox review and your child will be referred for further review with the orthopaedic surgeon.
- If Botox treatment has been used before, the child or young person's body can build up a resistance to the drug and this can make it less effective. If this is the case it will also be identified at the post-Botox review and your child will be referred back to the orthopaedic consultant.

The following are other risks of botox treatment. Please note these occurrences are very rare:

- It can cause itchy skin or skin rashes.
- It can cause temporary loss of control of the bladder or bowel.
- It can cause stomach upset such as diarrhoea.
- It can cause problems with swallowing and talking.
- It can cause breathing problems including difficulty breathing; on rare occasions the treatment has led to aspiration pneumonia, which can be life threatening.

Another rare side effect is that the child or young person may be allergic to the Botox and it can cause severe life threatening allergy (anaphylaxis). This usually happens very soon after the treatment and medical staff at the hospital will manage this as necessary in the hospital.

If you have any concerns that your child has any of these symptoms please contact ward 25 for advice on telephone 01623 672246. If your child has breathing or swallowing difficulties please take your child to your nearest Emergency Department immediately for urgent assessment.



Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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