

Information for Patients

What is Intravesical Botulinum Botox and how it works?

Department of Urology

What is Botox, and how does it work?

Botox (Botulinum Toxin type A) is used to treat a number of conditions, more recently for use in the treatment of urinary symptoms such as urgency, frequency and incontinence. The use of Botox for urinary symptoms is currently an unlicensed use and therefore limited to use by specialists in the field of bladder conditions. Botox works by causing muscle relaxation.

What are the benefits of Botox?

The aim of the treatment is to reduce urinary symptoms. The effect of treatment can take up to 10 days to become apparent so some patients may not notice any immediate relief of their symptoms. Eventually, the effect of botox will wear off and you may notice a gradual return of symptoms. As all patients have a different experience it is impossible to predict how long after your treatment this will happen, however the treatment effect will commonly last 6-9 months. Retreatment is available for patients if required.

What are the risks?

You may see some blood in the urine initially after treatment. Urine infections occur in some patients. These may be caused by the procedure itself, or maybe due to incomplete bladder emptying as the botox takes effect. Up to 30% of patients may require temporary self catheterisation to help the bladder to empty. Other very rare potential adverse events include:-

- Allergic reaction
- Generalised muscle weakness
- Flu-like symptoms

Prior to treatment

Prior to your appointment for botox treatment you will be seen by the specialist nurse and taught how to perform intermittent self-catheterisation. This involves you learning how to pass a small plastic tube into your bladder in order to drain urine. You will be asked to bring a list of any current medications you are taking, and let us know if you have any known allergies. The botox treatment will be discussed with you by the doctor and you will be asked to sign a consent form. Otherwise there is nothing specific you need to do before the procedure.

How are the injections administered?

A small amount of jelly with a local anaesthetic is inserted into your urethra, 'freezing' the area so you feel no pain. A small telescope (cystoscope) is then passed into your bladder through your urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder to outside the body). Your bladder is filled with water through the telescope which may make you feel like you need to go to the toilet. The doctor then passes a small needle down the telescope and injects between 10-20 injections of botox into the bladder wall. The telescope is then removed and you can go to the toilet and empty your bladder as normal. The treatment is performed in an outpatient department. It takes approximately 5-10 minutes from the telescope going into the bladder to the telescope coming out.

Is the procedure painful?

The procedure may be uncomfortable but should not be painful. As the botox is being injected it can sting for a few seconds. You can speak to the doctor and nurse during the whole procedure so if you experience any discomfort you can ask for the procedure to be stopped at any time. Most patients feel no pain afterwards.

After the procedure

You will be given a prescription for a three day course of antibiotics to take home with you to prevent infection, please ensure that you complete the course. You will be asked to wait in the department for half an hour, after which you may go home.

The procedure should not affect your ability to drive but you should wait until any discomfort you may have has resolved. After your treatment the specialist nurse will ensure that you have a supply of catheters at home in case they are required. The specialist nurse will telephone you at home the following day and you will be seen in outpatient clinic a week later. You may notice that your urinary flow is slower after botox treatment, this is normal and to be expected.

Discharge advice following Intravesical Botulinum

- Following this procedure you may see a small amount of blood in your urine. This should subside after 24 hours.
- It may burn or sting when you pass urine. This should subside after 2-3 days.
- Please ensure that you complete the full course of antibiotics given to you after the procedure. However, if you develop a temperature, your urine is smelly or cloudy and you need to pass urine frequently then you may have a urine infection. Contact the department or your GP as you may need a further course of antibiotics.
- Your urinary flow will be slower after botox treatment, this is normal and to be expected. If however, you feel that you are not emptying your bladder properly please insert one of your catheters to see if urine has been retained in your bladder. If you find that you are not emptying your bladder properly, you will need to insert a catheter 2 to 4 times per day depending on how much urine is being retained in the bladder. If the use of the catheters is required to drain the bladder please inform specialist nurses as soon as possible.
- You can eat and drink as normal after the procedure.
- You can drive and return to work following the procedure if you wish.
- You can resume sexual activity as soon as you feel comfortable to do so.

Contact details

If you do have any queries or questions please do not hesitate to contact us:-

Coral Seymour, Paulette Hussain & Zoe Ladd
Urology Clinical Nurse Specialists on:- 01633 – 234976

Urology Outpatients Department on:- 01633 – 234979

Urology Assessment Unit on:- 01633 – 234029

Urology Ward D 2 East (24 hours) on:- 01633 – 234044

Waiting List Clerk:- 01633 - 234970

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