

Botox (botulinum A) is the non-surgical alternative to a face-lift and other anti-aging treatments. Deep wrinkles on the forehead and so-called anger lines between the eyebrows can disappear for months with just a few tiny injections. Discomfort is minimal. The entire procedure can be performed during a routine office visit and patients may return back to work immediately.

Botox has become the most popular cosmetic procedure in the count. As we age, large muscles on the face become more contracted without any conscious effort. These manifest as horizontal creases across the forehead and vertical creases between the eyebrows, also known as glabellar folds. Squinting can lead to crow's feet which are also amenable to Botox. As the ability to contract these muscles is diminished, the face becomes more open and friendly. Our philosophy at Goldman Dermatology, PLLC is not so much to just erase wrinkles as to call more attention to a person's eyes and mouth. Judicious use of Botox can make the eye appear larger and allow more area to place make-up on the eyelids.

The medical use of Botox was initially by ophthalmologists interested in spasms of the eye muscle. A Canadian ophthalmologist married to a dermatologist noted the cosmetic improvement in these patients and the rest is history. As many as 3 million people get Botox injections every year.

Botox has an incredible safety record when administered by an experienced physician. Botox is botulinum toxin, a neurotoxin (a neurotoxin is a chemical that blocks nerve function). Nerves treated with Botox block muscles; ability to contract in these areas. Allergic reaction and infection after treatment have been extremely rare. However, a small number of side effects can occur. Firstly, bruising at the sites of injection has been reported but is minimized by holding pressure for a few minutes. If the injections are too close to the eyebrow, Botox can diffuse to the upper eyelids causing eyelid ptosis (a droopy sleepy appearance) that usually resolve in a few weeks. Older patient with severe forehead wrinkling may complain of brow ptosis; that is the treatment worked so well that the forehead creases resolved but the skin hangs heavy on the eyebrows accentuating redundant eyelid skin.

Botox is FDA-approved for cosmetic uses. Other indications include treatment of excessive sweating in the axilla (hyperhidrosis) Much higher doses used by neurologists for patient with cerebral palsy have rarely lead to diffusion of the Botox leading the swallowing and respiratory problems. Recently, a competitor to Botox, called Dysport has become available. It has the same active ingredient but is made differently. Time will tell if it lasts longer or has different side effects.