

Botulinum Toxin

Since the introduction of *botulinum* toxin for treating squint (crossed eyes) and blepharospasm (uncontrollable blinking) by Dr. Alan Scott in the 1970s, the toxin has been used to treat many other eye problems, including uncontrollable blinking, turning-in of the eyelids, lid retraction associated with thyroid eye disease, ulcers of the cornea, even facial muscle spasms

Botulinum toxin is a neurotoxin derived from a bacterium called *Clostridium Botulinum* which can prevent nerves from controlling the target muscles, reducing the muscle's firmness. *Botulinum* toxin injection is today a popular non-surgical method of rejuvenating facial skin and reducing wrinkles around the eyes and on the forehead.

It is often used to lift and contour the brow or widen the appearance of the eye aperture. It is also used for "collagen remodelling" and atrophy of the injected muscles, and for pruning the masseter muscle (the muscle in the cheek that closes the jaw during chewing) making the lower jaw smaller.

Most side effects related to *botulinum* toxin are minor and temporary. Pain, swelling and local bruising are caused by the injection itself. But paralysis may occur if the *botulinum* toxin gets into nearby muscles. Such situations can be avoided if the clinician makes an accurate and comprehensive assessment of the facial area to be injected; has a detailed knowledge of the facial area's structure; and uses a precise injection technique.