Botulinum Toxin (Botox® Therapy) Information

Botulinum toxin is a poison produced by certain kinds of bacteria. food containing botulinum toxin can cause food poisoning (botulism). Since the 1980's, purified botulinum toxin has been used as a treatment for muscle spasticity. The toxin is given by injecting it into muscles. Botulinum toxin that is used to treat people is made a special way so that very tiny amounts of the toxin are contained in the injection (shot). The amount of toxin in the shot is much less than is needed to cause botulism.

Dr. Scott, an eye doctor in California, was the first doctor to use botulinum toxin injections to treat people. He used the injections to help people with cross-eyes. This type of injection is still used. For this condition, small amounts of the toxin are injected into the eye muscles. The toxin makes the eye muscles weak and keeps the eyes from being crossed. The brand name of botulinum toxin is BOTOX® Cosmetic.

Dr. Koman uses injections of botulinum toxin to help children who have spastic (tight) muscles because of cerebral palsy or head injury. Injections of toxin are given in muscles which are too tight or too active. The toxin usually helps the muscles to become less tight. The effects of the toxin do not last forever. However, the injections can be repeated if the muscle becomes tight again.

Botulinum toxin is used in children with tight muscles to help in several ways. It helps children who are having trouble fitting into their braces or shoes or who are walking on their toes. It is also used to help children who are having trouble sitting in their wheelchairs or who are having problems with their hip joints. It can be injected into the arm muscles to relieve pain and loosen muscles. The toxin may also help children wait for a while before they need to have surgery.

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Side Effects of Toxin Injections

As reported by other patients, the most common side effects of botulinum toxin injections are listed below:

1. Soreness or stiffness of injected muscles. Soreness is experienced after toxin injections just as with any other type of injection. The soreness may last for 2 to 3 days. Tylenol taken before the shot and after the shot for 2 to 3 days helps to relieve this soreness. Warm baths may also be used to help relax the injected muscles and to reduce muscle soreness and stiffness.

2. Redness or slight swelling in the area of injection is often experienced due to the trauma from the needle entering the muscle. the redness and swelling usually disappears after two days.

To date, no patient receiving toxin injections at Wake Forest University School of Medicine has experienced systemic (whole body) effects. However, if your child

experiences excessive weakness in the arms or legs, over the whole body, or has problems breathing, go directly to your local emergency room and then call the physician who gave your child the injection.

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