

Read This Before Getting Botox

ERIN LUKAS May 22, 2018 @ 10:45 am

Despite the popularity of natural beauty treatments and anti-aging skincare regimens, interest in Botox in the US only continues to rise. The injectable is still number one when it comes to minimally invasive procedures, with 7.2 million Botox sessions in 2017, a two percent increase from the year prior. From softening forehead wrinkles to tightening the jawline, the versatility and minimal downtime of Botox is what's made the injectable go from taboo to regular subject of conversation.

As you likely know by now, botulinum toxin works by paralyzing muscles, thus smoothing out wrinkles and furrows in the skin. But if you're considering Botox for the first time, you probably have a lot of questions.

Here, four top plastic surgeons and cosmetic dermatologists break down everything you need to know before getting Botox injections.

1. EXPECT TO PAY

"If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is," says Dr. Dara Liotta, a New York City-based, double board-certified cosmetic and reconstructive facial plastic surgeon. So how much can you expect to pay for injections? That depends on the cost of the material used, who's administering it, and where you live. "The busier, more well-trained, board-certified physician injectors who are in major cities and using high-end products will likely cost the most," she adds.

Board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. John Paul Tutela recommends avoiding the discounts that show up on Groupon and other bargain sites. "Most of the time, the product is purchased from overseas and the supply chain isn't regulated at all," he explains.

Doctors typically charge by the unit, so the patient only pays for the actual amount of Botox that's being used, but you can also be given a price based on the area of your face that's being injected. On average, this can range from \$280 for crow's feet or horizontal facial lines to \$480 for vertical frown lines.

2. SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION

Whether it's on the same day or a week before you're scheduled to get Botox, set up a consultation with your doctor. It's crucial that you and your doctor are on the same wavelength so that you have realistic expectations and are happy with the results. "A consultation is first and foremost legally required prior to any medical treatments," says New York City-based, board-certified cosmetic dermatologist [Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank](#). "Consultation includes a discussion of cosmetic concerns, treatment options, and risks and benefits. All are essential to a safe and effective result."

3. IT'S NOT LIKELY THAT YOU'LL BRUISE

A common misconception is that Botox leaves bruising. While that's always a risk, it's pretty minimal. If you do bruise, Dr. Frank says that many doctors offer post-Botox lasers to minimize the discoloration.

4. YOU CAN GO RIGHT BACK TO WORK AFTER GETTING BOTOX

Aside from providing almost-instant results, what's made Botox so game-changing is that there's zero downtime following the procedure. While you may experience some swelling and a bit of numbness, you can go back to work or get on with your day right after your appointment. "There may be some swelling and there a few activity restrictions (to avoid increasing the blood flow to your face), but certainly, one could go back to work the same day after having the injections," says board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Deborah Yu of [The Plastic Surgery Center](#). Generally, you can expect the swelling to go down in an hour or two.

5. OK, SO WHAT CAN'T YOU DO AFTER GETTING BOTOX?

There might not be any recovery time, but there are some limitations on what you can do right after you leave your Botox appointment so that the injectable doesn't move or shift from the area where it was administered. This includes heavy cardio, massages, or hitting up a sauna or steam room at the gym. Dr. Tutela says that intense heat can deactivate Botox.

As for your skincare routine, Dr. Tutela recommends that you avoid using retinol-based products for 24 to 48 after getting Botox injections. You can, however, wear your usual makeup.

6. WHAT IS THE BEST AGE TO START BOTOX?

There's no right or wrong age to get Botox; it's a decision that's ultimately up to you and whether you're looking to enhance a certain feature or minimize signs of aging. "I don't like to tell people to treat what they don't have, but in reality, the later you start, the more difficult it is to achieve the ideal results," says Dr. Frank. "If you're starting to see traces of lines in your mid-to-late twenties or early thirties, it's best to be proactive about it."

On the other end of the spectrum, if you're extremely expressive and more prone to developing fine lines, a preventative neuromodulator might be a better choice. "There are brands that leave a bit more motion and 'less freezing' in the face for these patients," explains Dr. Frank. "The largest growing demographic at my practice are millennials in their late 20s and early 30s. These days, neuromodulator is just a form of grooming (like getting waxed, coloring your hair, getting facials, etc)."