

NEWBEAUTY

THE BEAUTY AUTHORITY

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AWARD-
WINNING
PRODUCTS

THE DREW DIARIES

THE POWER OF LIP LINER
HER LUNCHTIME LASER
THE FRESHEST FACE MASKS

LOOK



THE CLINIC
FACE+BODY

THE NEUROTOXIN REVOLUTION

WITH A CLUTCH OF TRAILBLAZING TOXINS IN THE PIPELINE AND A LITANY OF PROMISING NEW USES COMING TO LIGHT, BOTOX AND CO. ARE POISED TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE WELLNESS REALM

MYTH VS. FACT

Given their origin story, is it any wonder neurotoxins are steeped in confusion? Here, top doctors demystify their superpowers.

Myth:

Toxins will leave me forever frozen.

Fact:

Neurotoxins' line-limiting triumphs are only temporary, and again, the drugs can be finagled to grant more or less of an effect. "In the early stages of Botox, everyone wanted to skate off their foreheads," recalls Dr. Frank. "Now, that is out of vogue and ill-advised because that sort of complete and chronic paralysis can negatively affect the way you age, making the brow feel heavy and eyes look smaller." Baby Botox has become the new standard of care: conservative doses that maintain movement and expression.

Born of the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*, the botulinum neurotoxin is a protein, exerting its influence by cutting communication between nerves and muscles to immobilize its target. In its raw form, it's one of the deadliest substances known to man, but when purified, heavily diluted, and expertly injected in tiny doses, it can harness its powers for good. The type-A toxin activating FDA approved neurotoxins Botox Cosmetic, Dysport and Xeomin has been shown to ameliorate everything from crow's-feet and muscle spasms to chronic migraines and urinary incontinence. Fully defying its vanity-drug stigma, "more than half of the botulinum toxin now used in the world is for medical purposes," says New York dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank, MD. Aiming to add to its repertoire, Botox is currently being investigated as a treatment for depression, a host of pain disorders, even atrial fibrillation in cardiac patients—earning itself a reputation as "the product that keeps on giving," says Chicago facial plastic surgeon Steven Dayan, MD.

THE BIG THREE: WHICH WRINKLE-BUSTER IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

While Botox Cosmetic may be the most famous of the bunch, Dysport and Xeomin contain the same type of toxin, and work by identical means—blocking the release of a chemical messenger called acetylcholine to lessen muscle contractions for three to four months in most cases. "The overall gestalt of neurotoxins is that there is no one best—they all fill different niches," says Dr. Frank, due to slight distinctions between final formulations.

BEAUTY AND BEYOND: POPULAR USES FOR NEUROTOXINS

SCARS "Tension is the worst thing for a fresh scar, but when underlying muscles move, the skin stretches," says New York plastic surgeon Alan Matarasso, MD. "By freezing the area with Botox [an off-label use], we remove the tension and get a better scar." (Think of it as a chemical cast.) Studies show Botox may also modify wound healing by other means, tamping down inflammation along with growth factors known to promote keloid scarring, says Dr. Frank.