

Botulinum (Botox®) Injections



Orthopedic Clinic

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Botox® Injections to Reduce Spasticity

A child with spastic muscles (tightness) may find it hard to move. As the child gets older, contracture (permanent tightness) of the muscles can lead to deformities of the spine and limbs. Usually spasticity is treated with physiotherapy, bracing, and surgery. Botox® injections are another way to deal with muscle spasticity.

How Does Botox® Work?

The “tone” of a muscle – how floppy or tight it is – depends on the nerve impulses (messages) which reach the muscle from the brain. These messages are carried by chemicals in the nerves to that muscle. Botox® is a substance which blocks the chemical message before it can enter the muscle. In this way it prevents the muscle tightening which produces spasticity. The “block” is most effective 1-2 weeks after the injections. Three to six months later the spasticity usually returns. Botox® does not cure spasticity.

What are the Main Benefits of Botox®?

1. Botox® helps to relax muscles and decrease muscle tone. This helps to prevent contractures for improved function and ability to move the joint through the full range of motion. There are times when Botox® is used to delay the need for surgery, your child’s surgeon will make that decision.

2. Botox® is also useful to improve the tolerance of wearing a brace or splint. Bracing a relaxed muscle helps prevent contractures.

How is Botox® Given?

Your child will be given Botox® injections by your child’s orthopedic surgeon in the Orthopedic Clinic or Operating Room. The area that the Botox® will be given is covered with a cream called “Emla” which numbs the skin. The orthopedic surgeon injects Botox® through the skin into the spastic muscle using a very fine needle. Most children are afraid of needles so we do our best to make the injections easy. If needed, the orthopedic surgeon will discuss giving the Botox® injections in the operating room.

What happens after Botox® injections?

Your child can go back to his/her usual activities. Avoid bicycle riding or climbing for a few days—your child might be a little unsteady. Some children require a cast to help stretch out tendons and muscles. The cast is usually left on for 3-4 weeks after the injections. Your child can continue with his/her therapy program while casted. After the cast is removed, his/her therapist can work to stretch the muscle that was injected, strengthen other muscles and encourage new skills.

If you have any questions please call:



(604) 875-2345 ext 4942