

Botox Information Sheet (for OAB)

What is Botox?

Botox, or onabotulinumtoxinA, is a protein made by a bacteria called Clostridium botulinum. It is the same toxin that causes a type of food poisoning called botulism. It works by blocking the signals from nerves that cause muscles to contract. This causes muscles to relax. Botox is used for many medical problems, including overactive bladder.

What is overactive bladder (OAB)?

OAB is a very common condition. It becomes more common as we get older. People with OAB feel the need to urinate (“pee”) frequently. This is often associated with a strong urge to urinate, sometimes leading to urine leakage (“incontinence”). Your urologist will have ruled out other potential causes of your bladder symptoms before making a diagnosis of OAB.

Who is a candidate for Botox treatments?

A person who has OAB that has not responded to medications may be a candidate for Botox treatment. Before treatment, your urologist may perform a test to be sure your bladder is emptying before considering Botox treatment.

You should not have Botox treatment if you have an allergy to Botox, have a urinary tract infection, are pregnant, or you are breastfeeding.

How do I prepare for my Botox treatments?

You can eat and drink as normal the day of your Botox treatment. You can take all your usual medications the day of your procedure. **If you take a blood thinner, you should ask for specific instructions from your urologist.** You can drive yourself to and from your Botox treatment. **If any of these instructions do not apply to you, you will be given specific instructions.** When in doubt, you should contact your urologist before you drive to your appointment.

If you have a drug plan that covers Botox treatment, you may have received a prescription for Botox from your urologist. If this is the case, please go to the pharmacy, pick up your Botox, and bring it to your appointment. Botox should be kept refrigerated.

You may have received a prescription for antibiotics to take around the time of your Botox treatment. Please fill this prescription and take it as written on the bottle.

What should I expect at the hospital the day of my Botox treatments?

You will be given a time to arrive at the hospital. Please arrive on time. Once you arrive, you will register and be directed to the outpatient procedure operating area. Once you are there, identify yourself to the person who is there to greet you. You will then meet a nurse, who will direct you to the changing room. The nurse will ask you a series of questions. These questions are asked to every patient to ensure that the correct person gets the correct procedure! You will be asked to sign a consent form indicating you agree to proceed with Botox treatment (if you have not already).

A nurse will place a catheter (“tube”) into your bladder. The nurse will then put local anesthetic (“freezing”) into your bladder through the catheter. The catheter and anesthetic will remain in your bladder until your procedure. You will be assigned to a waiting area, where you will remain until it is time to go to the procedure room.

You will meet another nurse, who will verify who you are, and clarify that you are at the hospital for cystoscopy. The nurse will bring you to the room where the procedure will be performed.

Your urologist will enter the room. The catheter that was placed in the waiting area will be removed. You will then have a cleaning solution applied to your genitals. Sterile drapes will be placed over you. These steps help prevent infection. A lubricated cystoscope will be placed into your bladder. A cystoscope is a small camera that allows your urologist to see inside your bladder. Your urologist will then perform Botox injections using a small needle. Your urologist will usually perform about 10 injections to spread the Botox throughout your bladder. The entire procedure will take about 5-10 minutes. Your procedure may be longer if your urologist feels it is needed.

Does it hurt to have Botox injections?

It may sound like Botox injections will be painful, but it does not usually cause distressing levels of pain. Some discomfort may be experienced during the procedure, but your urologist will do their best to be gentle and cause the least amount of pain possible. Most people tolerate this procedure very well.

What should I expect after my Botox injections? What are potential complications?

After your procedure, you can resume regular activities, including work, exercise, and sex. You may notice that there is blood in your urine, mild burning when you urinate, and a desire to urinate a bit more often. These symptoms usually resolve within a few days. If your Botox treatment is successful, you should see your OAB symptoms improve over 1-2 weeks. On average, a successful Botox treatment will last for 6-9 months.

The most common complication of Botox is urinary tract infection. Approximately 5% of people will experience this, even when antibiotics are given with Botox treatment. Symptoms of a bladder infection include: urinating frequently, being unable to hold your urine for a long time, burning with urination, and urinary leakage. You should contact your urologist if you think you have an infection. Serious infections may have the same symptoms as a bladder infection, but also fever, chills, and flu-like symptoms. If you think you have an infection, you should contact your urologist. If they are not available, you should head to the emergency room for assessment.

A potential side effect of Botox treatment is the inability to urinate. This happens in less than 5% of patients. You may have to learn how to empty your bladder using a small catheter multiple times a day if this happens to you. This improves over time, but it could take a few months to get better. If you do not think you would be able to do this, you should tell your urologist. If you have trouble emptying your bladder after your treatment, you should contact your urologist. If your urologist is unavailable or you are in distress, you should go to the emergency room to have your bladder drained.

Should I stop taking medications I am taking for OAB after Botox treatments?

You should ask your urologist if you should stop taking medications you were using to treat OAB.

Will I have a follow up visit after my Botox treatment?

Your urologist will organize an appointment with you to discuss whether or not your Botox injection was effective.