

## What is botulinum toxin?

Botulinum toxin is a medicine sometimes given to relax muscles.

- It is given as an injection (a shot).
- It works by blocking and decreasing the release of a certain chemical (called acetylcholine) that is responsible for muscle activation.

## Why does my child need botulinum toxin?

Botulinum toxin can help to:

- Reduce muscle tone or tightness (spasticity).
- Relieve pain from muscle spasms.
- Improve movement in the arms and legs.

## What are the types of botulinum toxins?

Botulinum toxins come in two forms: type A and type B. The doctor will decide which type is best for your child. The different botulinum toxin products are not exactly alike.

Some brand names for botulinum toxins include:

- Botox (botulinum type A)
- Dysport (botulinum type A)
- Myobloc (botulinum type B)

## How is botulinum toxin given?

- Your child's doctor will give this medicine as a shot into the affected muscle or groups of muscles.
- An anesthetic (numbing) cream can be put on your child's skin first. This helps decrease pain at the injection sites.
- The amount of medicine given to your child is based on certain factors until the doctor finds the best dose for your child.

## What medicines should my child avoid?

Tell your child's doctor about any medicines your child is taking. Check with the doctor before your child starts any new medicines. This includes prescription and over-the-counter products.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Botulinum toxin, continued

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Be sure to tell the doctor if your child:

- Is taking or has recently taken medicines for an infection. This might include amikacin, gentamicin, tobramycin or streptomycin.
- Has received botulinum toxin shots in the past.
- Takes allergy or cold medicine.
- Takes sleep medicine.
- Takes a muscle relaxant.
- Takes aspirin or blood thinners.

## What are some possible side effects?

Side effects can happen hours, days or weeks after an injection of botulinum toxin. Your child may have one or more of these:

- Discomfort or pain at the injection site
- Dry mouth or eyes
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- Headache
- Neck pain
- Fever [temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher]

## Call 911 right away if your child has any of these:

- Trouble swallowing, talking or breathing
- Loss of strength or muscle weakness all over the body
- Double vision, blurred vision or drooping eyelids
- Change or loss of voice
- Trouble saying words clearly
- Loss of bladder control
- Signs of severe allergic reaction, such as hives, swelling of the mouth, eyes or face, breathing problems, chest tightness, wheezing, dizziness or feeling faint

## Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any of these:

- A new rash or itching
- Redness, swelling, pus, drainage or bad smell at the injection site
- Fever [temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher] that is not relieved by acetaminophen (Tylenol or other less costly store brand)

Also call your child's doctor if you have:

- Any questions about follow-up visits.
- Any questions or concerns about your child or his botulinum toxin treatment.

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# Botulinum toxin, continued

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## When can I expect to see results?

Each child is different, and results vary.

- You may notice some results in 4 to 7 days after the injection, but it may take 1 to 2 weeks before they work best.
- Botulinum toxin injections typically last about 3 to 6 months. When the botulinum toxin begins to wear off, talk with your child's doctor about whether or not your child needs more injections.

Some changes you may see in your child include improvement with:

- Range of motion
- Stretching
- Wearing braces
- Crawling, standing, moving or walking

## What follow-up care is needed?

Your child will need follow-up care to check how he responds to the botulinum toxin treatment. The doctor may also order physical therapy (PT) for your child.

## What medicine safety tips should I know?

- Always read the label 3 times before giving medicine to your child.
- Use a pediatric measuring device to measure exact doses of liquid medicines. You can get one at your pharmacy. **Do not** use kitchen spoons to measure your child's medicine.
- Watch to make sure your child takes his entire dose of medicine.
- Keep all medicines in their labeled container where your child cannot get to them. If possible, store all medicines in a locked cabinet.
- Throw away all medicines after their expiration date on the container or when your child has finished the prescribed dose.
- Tell your child's doctor, dentist and the emergency department (ED) about any medicines your child is taking. Take the medicines with you.
- Call the Georgia Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222 or call 911 **right away** if your child takes too much medicine or has a bad reaction to medicine.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**