

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:

- Decrease 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 2 forms: type A and type B. The doctor will decide which type is best for your child. The different botulinum toxins are not exactly alike.

Some brand names for botulinum toxins include:

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

How is botulinum toxin given?

- Your child's doctor will give the 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 shot 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 medicines.

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

Botulinum toxin, continued

Be sure to tell the doctor if your child:

- Takes 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 a shot of botulinum toxin. Your child may have 1 or more of these:

- Discomfort or pain at the shot site
- Dry mouth or eyes
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- Headache
- Fever (temperature of 100.4°F or higher)

Talk with your child's doctor about risks for more severe side effects. They may also be listed in the consent (permission) form that you will complete. Some of these possible side effects include:

- Breathing problems
- Swallowing problems
- A lot more drooling than normal
- Loss of bladder control

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor **right away** if your child has:

- A new rash or itching.
- Redness, swelling, pus, drainage or bad smell at the shot site.
- Fever (temperature of 100.4°F or higher) that does not get better with acetaminophen (Tylenol or less costly store brand).

Also call your child's doctor if you have:

- Questions about follow-up visits.
- Questions or concerns about your child or their botulinum toxin treatment.

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

Botulinum toxin, continued

When should I call 911?

Call 911 **right away** if your child has:

- 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 (very bad) allergic reaction, such as:
 - Hives
 - Swelling of the mouth, eyes or face
 - Breathing problems
 - Chest tightness
 - Wheezing
 - Dizziness
 - Feeling faint

When can I expect to see results?

The results are different for each child.

- You may notice some results in 4 to 7 days after the shot. It may take 1 to 2 weeks before it works best.
- Botulinum toxin shots most often 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 shots.

Your child may have improvements with:

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

Does my child need follow-up care?

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

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.

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