

BOTOX BLOG

Botox is the new eyebrow wax. Over the last few years, it is big and getting bigger. Brand name recognition is about 95% for the word 'Botox'. Australians spend over \$500 million per year on Botox and dermal fillers. It is no longer the domain of the rich and famous, it is now used by many office workers, hairdressers, flight attendants, public servants and people in mainstream jobs popping in for a lunchtime fix of botulinum toxin to relax their worry and frown lines to soften their smile lines and forehead lines. It is often available now in beauty salons and hairdressers as well injected by mobile 'nurse injectors'.

Interestingly, Australia is the capital of Botox use in the world. Australians are the biggest users of Botox on a per capita basis in the world and within Australia, the Gold Coast is the capital Botox user in the country. This is no doubt due to the affluence of Australian society and also due to the ravages of sun damage and photo ageing that we see in our climate.

Botulinum toxin is a product derived from a bacteria which relaxes the muscle into which it is injected. It works by relaxing the muscle which therefore relaxes the skin overlying the muscle, which then does not contract or furrow up as much as it otherwise would. It is used in many different age groups from women in early 20's right through to their 80's. However, it is more commonly used in the 30-50 year age groups. It is recognized not to be so effective in women who are older, in their late 60's and 70's, where their skin tone is very lax and does not adhere so closely to the underlying muscle. It is often said that repeating injections of botulinum therapy has anti-ageing properties because the repeated muscle action does not etch in the lines and wrinkles over and over again. Many younger people are interested in the preventative properties of botulinum therapy to slow down the ageing process.

During the last decade we have seen an explosion use of Botox in many different areas of medicine. For instance it is used in the treatment of sweating, for spasticity in children with cerebral palsy (in much higher doses), for the treatment of anal fissures, for spasm in the food pipe and voice box, in the treatment of migraines and headaches, to name but a few.

Having been widely used for the last three decades, there have been no known increases in long term side-effects such as cancer or any other side-effects. It is generally very safe to use in experienced hands. It is common to experience some mild raised lumps in the hour or so after injection, these can be covered up or minimised easily with the application of make up. Occasionally some small bruises can be encountered due to the needle disrupting the skin. One of the potential side-effects is headache. One in 10 can experience a headache, especially when injected into the frown area. However it is known to be used as a treatment for headaches and migraines, and many Botox users experience a reduction in the frequency of headaches, and notice these headaches or migraines returning when their Botox is wearing off, which can be a reminder for them

that their Botox is due again. Less common side effects are eyebrow droop or eyelid droop which can occur in approximately 1 in 500 cases. This tends to last only for a short time, for instance a few weeks because it is due to the Botox tracking along in the tissue. Allergies and double vision have been reported however these reports are rare.

All in all, the safety profile of Botox and Dysport is excellent when used in experienced hands.