

MEDICAL NEWS

Attention Headache Sufferers

Botox Injection May Help Your Chronic Headaches Feel Good *and* Look Good

The use of Botox for the prevention of migraine was discovered accidentally. It was first approved by the FDA for the eye muscle disorders, strabismus and blepharospasm in 1989.

Botox has been used by plastic surgeons to treat wrinkles for a few years. Several migraine sufferers reported that their migraines improved following the Botox injection.

Recent clinical research reported that chronic headache sufferers, who don't respond to other medications, might benefit from Botox injection.

Botox may offer an alternative for frequent migraine sufferers to help them getting off dangerous daily pain pills that these patients use excessively.

"With botox we may be able to manage severe chronic headaches without the undesirable side effects that have been associated with preventive migraine medications, such as drowsiness, weight gain, and confusion " said Dr. Suwan, Director of advanced specialty Headache. Botox is not yet FDA approved for headache treatment, but it has been used for other medical uses in the U.S. since 1989.

Migraine is a common debilitating neurological disorder that affects approximately 30 million Americans. Unfortunately, the impact of migraine is greatest between the age of 20-50, which are the most productive years where family and professional demands peak. Migraine is considered the leading cause of disability in the world, measured by days missed from work among working people.

Is Botox for you?

Your neurologist/ headache specialist may answer this question for you. Headache Management should involve thorough evaluation that includes detailed history and comprehensive neurological evaluation to R/O underlying serious medical conditions, and to direct the neurologist to the best treatment options. Usually, Botox is not the first treatment option, but it may be considered if the patient fails to respond to standard migraine preventives or if the patient is experiencing undesirable side effects from these medications such as confusion, weight gain, drowsiness or dizziness.

As noted above, Botox is not yet approved by the FDA for headache treatment, but it has been used for other medical uses in the U.S. and there is growing evidence in the medical literature supporting the use of Botox for many headache types. The decision to use Botox should be based on an in-depth discussion between you and your neurologist/ headache management specialist.

Costs of the injections versus the amount that would be spent on headache treatment and disability should be considered as well. Growing number of insurance companies have been covering the costs of Botox injection based on the above noted consideration.

How does it work?

Botox therapy partially paralyzes forehead muscles for about three months. Added to this, there is growing evidence in the medical research supporting Botox action on the central nervous system. It is injected locally into specific head muscles.

Is Botox safe for you?

It is safe, effective and essentially carries no risk as a headache treatment, if the original Botox (purified protein) injected properly, using the proper dose, by a neurologist/headache management specialist.

Other interventional headache management techniques may be available in specialty headache management clinics. The discussion of those is beyond the scope of this article. With all the great advances in headache management there is no reason to let your headaches control your life. Coping with dangerous side effects of daily medications and/or debilitating headaches are not supposed to be part of your life. Take the first step to be in charge of your life by conquering your headaches, and recapturing your life. *Dr Nesreen Suwan is a neurologist who specializes in treatment of headaches and migraines. The director of Advanced headache clinic. Central scheduling, (630) 245-1010.*



N. Suwan, M.D

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