

# Living with MS

## **Botox use in Multiple Sclerosis Patients**

Botox is a muscle relaxing medication that is approved by the FDA to treat upper and lower limb spasticity in adults as well as urinary incontinence resulting from overactivity of the bladder caused by MS or another neurologic condition. Botulinum toxin is a medication derived from a neurotoxin produced by bacteria (*Clostridium Botulinum*). In its natural form, this toxin causes botulism, a severe condition that can be fatal. Botox is designed to be used safely without causing botulism.

Spasticity is a condition in which certain muscles are continuously contracted. This contraction causes stiffness or tightness of the muscles and can interfere with normal movement. Spasticity can also cause muscle spasms (jerky involuntary movements) or clonus (repetitive involuntary movement). Stiffness and spasms are often bothersome and sometimes painful and they can interfere with the ability to carry out daily activities. Spasms may also disrupt sleep and increase daytime fatigue. When spasticity is severe, contractures (fixed limitations of range of motion) may develop.

Stretching, exercise and PT/OT are usually the first treatments for spasticity. Oral medications are often effective but may cause side effects such as drowsiness. When spasticity affects only a few muscles, local injections of Botox can be helpful. When several muscles are affected other options should be discussed.

Normally, the brain send messages to the muscles so they can contract and move. These messages are transmitted via the nerves to the muscles by a substance called acetylcholine. Botox blocks the release of acetylcholine from the nerve to the muscle, leading to short-term localized relaxation of the targeted muscles.

Botox is given as an injection into the muscle. The injections are given during an outpatient visit. Your healthcare provider will determine beforehand which muscles need to be injected. Because Botox doesn't travel far from the injection site, several injections are performed during one visit. Often times a machine called an EMG is used to help locate the correct muscle.

The effect of botulinum toxin is expected to last 2-6 months then gradually wears off. Maximum response is usually met at 4-6 weeks and lasts 10-12 weeks. Sometime PT or OT are needed to maximize the benefits of BT. It is always necessary to stretch and exercise at home.

Our office only does Botox injections for spasticity and migraine headaches but can refer you to another provider if it is determined that Botox for urinary problems is needed.

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/8824-treating-multiple-sclerosis-with-botox>

<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/Treating-MS/Medications/BOTOX>



## Vaccinations

There are a lot of questions regarding the safety of vaccinations in MS patients. The Academy of Neurology and the Immunization Panel of the MS Council for Clinical Practice Guidelines have published some general recommendations. However, you should always discuss with your MS provider before receiving any vaccinations.

- The influenza, hepatitis B, pneumococcal and tetanus vaccines are all inactivated and considered safe for people with MS.
- It is recommended that people with MS only receive the standard dose influenza vaccine and not the high dose vaccine available for people over 65 or the Flu-Mist.
- If you are currently experiencing a relapse you should wait to be vaccinated for 4-6 weeks.
- Live and live-attenuated vaccines are not always considered safe for patients on an MS treatment and should definitely be discussed with your provider.
- The MMR, varicella and zoster vaccine are live-attenuated and sometimes are required before starting an MS treatment. Other times are not recommended so check with your provider.
- Any live or live-attenuated vaccine should be administered at least 4 weeks before starting treatment with Ocrevus and should not be administered after starting Lemtrada.



## Upcoming Events:

- Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1:00pm-2:00pm
  - Biogen representative will have a display with information regarding Biogen medications and their patient resources
  - In the waiting area by the SMC MS Clinic
- Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> – Walk MS Lincoln @Holmes Park
  - Our office will have a table at the beginning/end
- Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> – Walk MS Omaha @Werner Park
  - Our office will have a table in the tent
- May 27<sup>th</sup>-May 31<sup>st</sup> our office will be closed so staff can attend an MS conference



## General Information/Tips

- Due to our increasing patient load, we need to start charging patients who cancel their appointment less than 24 hours in advance.
- Please arrive a half hour before your appointment to ensure there is adequate time for the check in process and our providers do not get behind for other patients.
- To schedule appointments please call registration at 402-443-4191. Our nurse is unable to schedule appointments and will have to transfer you.
- **Please notify Patti at 402-443-4191 ext 533 if you have any change in your medical or prescription insurance. Also please make sure to give registration both cards at check-in every time you come in.**
- If you have questions regarding the newsletter, please email Sam at [sjack@smcne.com](mailto:sjack@smcne.com).



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