

Botulinum toxin very rarely causes side-effects in other areas of the body. This may include a flu like illness and feeling tired with a headache. Side effects usually disappear within a few days or weeks. Although rare, you should seek immediate medical advice if you develop any problems with swallowing, speaking or breathing (with or without swelling of the face, lips or tongue, redness of the skin or a lumpy rash) after botulinum toxin treatment.

For further advice, please contact the Eye Clinic between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday 01744 646136/37 to speak to a nurse.

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# Botox treatment for blepharospasm and hemifacial spasm

## Information for patients

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Author: Lead nurse  
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Document Number: MWL2443  
Version: 001  
Review Date: 01/01/2028

## What is blepharospasm?

Blepharospasm is a medical condition that causes the muscles around your eyes to spasm involuntarily. It is thought to arise because of loss of control of the normal blink reflex. Frequent blinking or uncontrollable eye closure are common characteristics of blepharospasm. In the most severe cases, a person may be unable to open their eyes for several minutes. Some people find that their blepharospasm is worsened by certain things e.g. bright light, stress, social interactions etc. If you have blepharospasm, the pattern of the spasm may change throughout the day. For example, you may have few or no symptoms when you wake up in the morning, but they may start to appear or get worse when you are tired or stressed.

## What is hemifacial spasm?

Hemifacial spasm causes similar spasms around the eye, but only affects one side and usually involves other muscles elsewhere on the same side of the face e.g. the cheek and mouth. Some patients who develop hemifacial spasm can have a blood vessel in the brain that lies too near to the facial nerve and touches it, resulting in the spasms. Another cause is abnormal rewiring of the facial nerve, following a facial nerve paralysis, as it heals again over time. This is known as aberrant facial nerve regeneration.

## Treatment of blepharospasm and hemifacial spasm

Management of these conditions include simple measures, such as keeping the eyes comfortable with moisturising drops, using sunglasses (especially FL41 filters) or occasionally covering (occluding) one eye, which can stop the spasms temporarily. The most effective first line treatment for this condition is botulinum toxin type A.

## Botulinum toxin type A injections

Botulinum toxin injections, such as botulinum toxin and Dysport, are medical treatments that have been used by doctors for the treatment of many muscle problems. The injections help to relax muscles and are therefore used for blepharospasm and hemifacial spasm, to relax the muscles around the eyes. This reduces the involuntary closure of the eyes and helps patients to keep their eyes open when they want. They are generally not used for spasms in the lower face.

## What do botulinum toxin injections involve?

Small amounts of botulinum toxin are injected into the muscles around the eye to be treated. Usually around three to six injections are given at different sites, taking around one to two minutes. The injections may be a little painful but most people tolerate the discomfort well.

## What are the effects of the botulinum toxin?

It takes about three to five days before the injections take effect, and up to two weeks for the full effect to be seen. You should then notice a reduction in the amount of spasms you have around the treated eye(s). The effects of the botulinum toxin generally last for about three months, but then start to wear off. If you want to maintain the effect, you will need regular follow-up injections. Most patients repeat their injections around every three months.

## Are there any side effects?

The side effects of botulinum toxin treatment around the eyes, relate to it working too well or leaking into other muscles round the eye that are not deliberately meant to be weakened. All the side effects are temporary and will wear off as the botulinum toxin wears off; consequently, they should resolve within three months. Side effects include:

- Poor closure of the eye if the botulinum toxin works too well. This can result in dry eye, discomfort or blurry vision.
- A droopy upper lid, if the muscle holding up the eyelid is involved.
- Double vision, if the muscles moving the eye are involved.

In addition, you may get some bruising at the injection sites. Very rarely, patients can develop resistance to the treatment, rendering it less effective.