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Antiperspirant — who needs it? First it was wrinkles and then they discovered that Botox could end problem perspiration. But now, as ALEXANDRA SHIMO reports, more and more people want the shots so they don't perspire at all

ALEXANDRA SHIMO

Reed was sartorially savvy, physically fit, well-groomed and moisturized, a near-perfect prototype for the modern metrosexual male.

Like a growing number of Canadians, Reed turned to Botox.

"I did it perhaps for vanity. You have nice clothing. You want to look your best. You don't want that bothersome trait to ruin your evening. It was a very simple procedure that allowed me to feel better about myself."

Four years ago, the anti-wrinkle wonder was approved by Health Canada to treat hyperhidrosis, the medical condition that makes someone sweat excessively.

The pores of the skin are injected with botulinum toxin type A, the same that is used to combat the signs of aging.

"We see people in their 30s and 40s who travel a lot, work out or give public presentations. They have a cosmetic concern — having circles in the underarms of their shirts. They feel self-conscious, so they have the treatment."

This time, private medical coverage has helped to fuel the Botox boom. Most drug plans will not cover Botox for wrinkles because it is a cosmetic procedure. However, hyperhidrosis is considered a medical condition, so as long as a patient is properly diagnosed, treating it is covered by most medical plans.

"I decided to get it done because I trusted my doctor and it was a treatment that was covered by my drug plan," Reed says. "It turned out to be very cost efficient, and I intend to have it done again for the summer months."

Risks or no risks, most dermatologists say the treatment is only going to gain in popularity.

"We haven't seen anywhere near the numbers who will seek Botox treatment for excessive sweating," says Dr. Fred Weksberg, who has a private clinic specializing in cosmetic dermatology in Toronto.

"It's become very popular now because it's more in vogue and people are less embarrassed to talk about it. Out of all the people I treat, patients treated for excessive sweating with Botox are the most satisfied. My clients are extremely satisfied. Their self-confidence is boosted tremendously."