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COSMETIC REJUVENATION

A GUIDE TO SURGICAL AND NON-SURGICAL PROCEDURES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Botox Canada's top cosmetic procedure

by Jeannie Armstrong
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The latest survey conducted by Medicaard®, analyzing industry statistics for the cosmetic enhancement industry, reveals that Botox Cosmetic® is the leader among the top-surgical and non-surgical procedures performed in Canada.

In 2005, Canadians receive more than 142,274 Botox injections, an increase of 16.67 per cent over the previous year.

"Botox Cosmetic is the number one cosmetic procedure in North America, and for good reason," says Dr. Fred Weksberg, a cosmetic dermatologist in Toronto and an expert on Botox.

"Most of the public now is requesting non-invasive, non-surgical treatment. Botox is an easy procedure. It's a few small injections that help to relax the muscles in your face. These constantly contract and cause lines to develop in your face. When those muscles are relaxed, the lines start to diminish, resulting in a more youthful look. And when you look better, you feel better about yourself."

Botox is a purified protein derived from the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. Administered in small injections, it blocks nerve impulses that trigger overactive muscle contractions.

Research into Botulinum toxin, or Botox, dates back more than 100 years. "Botox is one of the most researched medications in the world, with over 1,500 publications in scientific and medical journals. It's very, very safe," says Dr. Weksberg.

In 1960, Health Canada approved the use of Botox by ophthalmologists for the treatment of strabismus (crossed eyes) and blepharospasm (uncontrollable eye blinking). Throughout the 1990s, Botox was also approved by Health Canada for the treatment of cervical dystonia



Before



After Botox Cosmetic

(involuntary head rotation caused by muscle spasm), equinus foot in children with cerebral palsy, and focal spasticity associated with stroke.

In 2001, Health Canada approved Botox as a non-surgical cosmetic treatment for frown lines and wrinkles, as well as for axillary hyperhidrosis (excessive underarm sweating).

Research into the benefits of Botox continues. The product is currently being investigated for the treatment of migraine headaches, post-stroke spasticity and overactive bladder.

As awareness of the safety and effectiveness of the product grows, more Canadians are opting to enhance their appearance with Botox.

"Initially approved for the frown lines between the eyebrows, Botox is now being used for lines on the forehead, for crow's feet lines around the eyes. We're also seeing more advanced applications of Botox around the lower part of the face, to bring up down-turning drooping corners of your mouth and bring them up a little bit. It's also being used for so-called 'necklace' lines, the aging lines that form across your neck," says Dr. Weksberg.

A single injection of Botox into a target muscle can inhibit muscle contraction and reduce the appearance of some wrinkles for several months, says Dr. Robert Tokaryk, a leading

Saskatoon plastic surgeon. Botox doesn't work instantly, advises Dr. Tokaryk. "It can take up to 14 days before the full effect is seen. It doesn't work instantly because it's used in very dilute concentrations for cosmetic purposes."

If planning to have Botox injections prior to a special event, Dr. Tokaryk advises planning accordingly. "If you're attending a specific event, then book your Botox injections two to four weeks ahead of time."

A Botox injection will be effective for approximately two to four months, says Dr. Tokaryk. "If you maintain it, and keep using it before it wears off, it tends to last longer. There's a cumulative effect. The more times you use Botox, the longer it seems to last. The improvement that you get builds upon previous improvement."

When opting for Botox treatments, it is important to see a skilled and experienced medical professional. "Plastic surgeons work in the facial areas all the time, doing surgery and exposing the muscles. We are able to recognize the variation from person to person. We see the muscle structure from the inside out," says Dr. Tokaryk. "A lot of family doctors are getting into Botox, but a weekend course on Botox injections isn't going to give you the same knowledge and expertise that years of surgical experience will."

Dr. Weksberg says, "You have to go to a professional who is experienced and knows what they're doing. You need to know how much to inject and where. The other thing you need is that aesthetic eye. The practice of medicine is both really a science and an art. You can know the science, but you also have to have that artistic eye to be able to help the patient aesthetically improve their face to make it look natural and improved."