

Patient information factsheet

Botox injections for axillary hyperhidrosis

We have given you this factsheet because your dermatology doctor has referred you for Botox (botulinum toxin) injections for your axillary hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating). We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

What is axillary hyperhidrosis?

Your sweat glands work when they get a message from your body's nervous system. If they get too many messages, they keep on working and you can sweat excessively. This is called hyperhidrosis. If this happens under your arms, it is called axillary hyperhidrosis.

What is Botox (botulinum toxin)?

Botox is a preparation of protein. It comes in the form of injections and can be used to temporarily reduce the appearance of facial wrinkles and to treat certain conditions that affect how the body functions, such as axillary hyperhidrosis.

How does it work?

When small doses of Botox are injected into the skin of the armpits, it blocks the signals from the nervous system that supply the sweat glands. This stops the sweat glands working so hard and prevents them from releasing sweat.

Are Botox injections suitable for everyone?

You will **not** be able to have Botox injections if:

- you are pregnant, considering becoming pregnant or breastfeeding
- you have been diagnosed with or have a family history of any neuro-muscular diseases, such as myasthenia gravis
- you are taking certain antibiotics (amino glycosides, such as neomycin, gentamicin, streptomycin and kanamycin) or you are using any drugs as muscle relaxants
- you have any bleeding disorder or are taking anticoagulant drugs

If any of these apply, please contact us on telephone: **023 8120 2871** as soon as possible to postpone or cancel your treatment.

Do I need to do anything before my appointment?

- Do not take Aspirin or Anadin for two weeks before your appointment.
- Do not shave under your arms or use deodorant during the three days before your appointment.

For your first appointment, please wear dark or black clothing, as we will paint an iodine solution onto your skin which will stain for a few days. Please also bring somebody to drive you home after your treatment.

What will happen during my Botox treatment?

During your first appointment, we will apply an iodine solution and starch powder to your armpits, so that we can identify the areas where you sweat. With a very fine needle, we will then repeatedly inject a tiny amount of Botox into your skin in these specific areas. The injections may sting briefly, but should not be too uncomfortable. The treatment will take approximately one hour.

How long will the Botox work for?

Botox is not a permanent cure and some people may get greater benefit than others. In axillary hyperhidrosis, Botox helps to stop or greatly reduce the symptoms. This will usually happen within two weeks of treatment and the effects may last between four and six months. If you find that this treatment has helped you, it can be repeated to give you the greatest benefit.

What are the potential side effects of Botox treatment?

If antibodies form against the drug, the treatment may not be as effective.

Common side effects

- Loss of hair at injection sites
- Hot flushes
- Compensatory sweating
- Weakness of arms
- Bleeding from injection sites
- Subcutaneous nodules (lumps under your skin)

Extremely rare side effects

- Toxin spread causing muscle weakness and breathing difficulties

If you experience swallowing, speech or breathing difficulties, seek immediate medical attention, calling **999** if necessary. Please inform the dermatology department on: **023 8120 2871** when you are able to.

After your Botox treatment

Do

- Resume normal activity immediately after the treatment.

Do not

- Use anti-perspirants (sweat blocking) for at least two to three days after the treatment.
- Exercise for 24 hours after the treatment.
- Drink alcohol for 24 hours after the treatment.

Alternatives

Your doctor has recommended Botox as the best treatment for your specific condition. Other treatments may also be available, depending on the type of condition you have. Please discuss this directly with your doctor or specialist nurse.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Dermatology department

Telephone: **023 8120 2871** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm, Thursday, 8am to 2pm only)

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Seeking and acting on patient feedback is key to improving the quality of our services. The Friends and Family Test gives you the opportunity to give your view on the care or treatment you've received.

You can complete the survey online by scanning the QR code below:



Useful links

www.hyperhidrosisuk.org

www.bad.org.uk/pils/hyperhidrosis

www.sweathelp.co.uk

www.nhs.uk/conditions/excessive-sweating-hyperhidrosis

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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