

Botulinum toxin for chronic migraine

Information for patients



Outstanding
Care for One+All

What is botulinum toxin?

Botulinum toxin (Botox) is a medicine used to help prevent chronic migraines.

Chronic migraine means you have:

- headaches on 15 or more days each month, and
- at least 8 of those days are migraines,
- for at least 3 months.

Why have I been prescribed it?

Your doctor has diagnosed you with chronic migraine.

Botulinum toxin is being offered because:

- you have already tried at least three other migraine prevention treatments, and
- you are not regularly overusing painkillers or migraine medicines such as sumatriptan (Imigran).

How does it work?

Botulinum toxin is given as 31 tiny injections into the muscles in the shoulder area, back of the neck, back of the scalp, above the ears and to the forehead above the eyes. The procedure takes around 10 minutes, and is given by a specially trained doctor, physician associate, or nurse.

Most people notice benefits within a few days to two weeks. The effects last for up to 3 months, so the treatment is usually repeated every three months.

Doctors are not completely sure exactly how botulinum toxin helps prevent migraines.

What are the possible side effects?

A severe allergic reaction is possible, but rare. After your first treatment, you will be asked to stay in the clinic for a short time.

Common side effects (fewer than 1 in 10 patients)

- Migraine temporarily gets worse for a few days after treatment
- Rash or itching
- Pain, bruising, bleeding or infection at the injection sites
- Drooping eyebrows or eyelids (usually starts after a few weeks and can last for a few weeks).
- Muscle weakness, pain, cramp, stiffness or tightness
- Neck pain or weakness (usually starts after a couple of days and can last for a few weeks).

Less common side effects (fewer than 1 in 100)

- Difficulty swallowing
- Skin pain
- Jaw pain
- Swollen eyelid.

You must tell us if you are receiving botulinum toxin treatment from any other practitioner.

Botulinum toxin and pregnancy

Don't

- ✗ Do not become pregnant whilst receiving botulinum toxin treatment.
- ✗ Do not breastfeed while having botulinum toxin treatment.

Do

- ✓ Tell your doctor if you become pregnant or are planning a pregnancy.

What should I look out for?

Get medical help immediately if you:

- have difficulty in breathing
- difficulty swallowing
- trouble speaking

following botulinum toxin treatment

What if I feel unwell?

During working hours, contact the neurology team:

➔ Email: rcht.neurology@nhs.net

Note

For anything you think is an emergency, contact your GP or the emergency services.

Further information

If you have any questions about your treatment, please speak to your healthcare practitioner or neurologist.



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call 01872 252690**

**Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust
Treliske, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3LJ.
Switchboard: 01872 250000**

Reference	RCHT2212
Printed	08/2026
Version	1.0
Review due	08/2029

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Patient Information 2026

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