



## Botulinum Toxin in the Treatment of Squint

Your questions answered

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Date of publication: June 2012  
Review date: June 2014  
MID Ref: 12050801



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## What is a squint?

A squint or "a turn in the eye" is known in medical terms as a strabismus. It occurs when one or more of the eye muscles which are involved in moving the eyes, do not work properly. This means the eyes do not point in the same direction.

## What is Botulinum Toxin?

Botulinum is a toxin used by doctors to weaken muscles. It can be injected into the muscles which are used to move the eyeball to change the position of the eye.

## Why do I need Botulinum Toxin?

Botulinum Toxin is used to see what might happen after squint surgery. This allows you and your eye surgeon to decide if you should go ahead with squint surgery.

## What does the procedure involve?

The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic. Your eye will be numbed with eye drops and the procedure is done while you are awake.

Two small sticky pads are placed on your cheek and wrist to help record electrical signals from the muscle. These pads are harmless and no discomfort should be felt from them.

You will be asked by the eye surgeon to look into certain directions while they inject the muscle. The muscle lies under the white part of your eyeball.

You may feel stinging and a slight pressure sensation when the muscle is injected, but this should wear off very quickly.





## What happens after the injection?

The eye does not need to be padded after the injection and there should be no pain after the procedure.

It is usual for the injection to cause a small bleed where the muscle has been injected. This can make the white part of your eye look red. This should settle after about ten days.

You will be given a follow up appointment to attend the eye department approximately two weeks after your procedure. This allows us to review the effect of the injection on the squint.

In the majority of cases a difference in the size of the squint should be noticed approximately three days after the injection.

## How long do the effects of the Botulinum Toxin last?

The effects from the toxin can last for three to four months; however this can be longer in some people.

## Are there any risks?

**Botulinum Toxin is largely free of major side effects but some things that have been reported are:**

- A red or bloodshot eye.
- Drooping of the upper eye lid (ptosis) – this is usually temporary.
- Double vision may be experienced, but this should settle after a short time. If this becomes troublesome then a patch or pad can be put over the eye until it settles. If you experience double vision you should not drive until this resolves.

## Risks continued

- In some cases the injection can “overcorrect” the squint, causing the eye to turn in the opposite direction. However as the toxin wears off the amount of overcorrection will reduce.
- No effect from the toxin on the position of the eye and therefore another injection of the toxin is needed.
- Permanent effects from the toxin - however this is rare, the toxin usually wears off within 4 months.
- Perforation or piercing of the eye - this is very rare.

## What are the advantages of Botulinum Toxin?

- The effects of Botulinum Toxin should wear off gradually over the four months following the injection. Therefore any problems from the toxin, such as double vision, should resolve. You may then decide whether to go ahead with squint surgery.
- The injection is carried out as an outpatient appointment and therefore does not require a stay in hospital.
- It can be used to assess the possible benefits of having squint surgery, such as getting back the ability to use your eyes together (binocular vision).

## Who is involved?

- Orthoptist – involved in managing the squint using non-surgical methods.
- Ophthalmologist – the eye surgeon.

