

MEDIA RELEASE

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'Botox' can harm as well as heal

Botox is well known for smoothing facial wrinkles, frown lines and crows feet, but did you know that botulinum toxin, the active ingredient in botox, is also used for medical purposes?

Although botulinum toxin is highly poisonous, when injected in small doses it has medicinal properties, Dr Adam Scheinberg of the Victorian Paediatric Rehabilitation Service explains in the latest edition of ***Australian Prescriber***.

Botulinum toxin is often used to help children with cerebral palsy and adults who have had a stroke. It works by weakening or relaxing contracted muscles and can treat eyelid tics, facial muscle spasms and excessive sweating.

“The effects of botulinum toxin are only temporary and repeat injections are usually needed after 3–4 months,” Dr Scheinberg writes.

Like any medicine, it is important to be realistic about the potential benefits of botulinum toxin and understand that there can be side effects.

“These may be mild such as tenderness or bruising at the injection site. However, difficulty with swallowing and speaking may be signs of something more serious and need immediate medical attention,” he warns.

The article also describes symptoms that occur in overdose. A few patients have died after treatment with botulinum toxin although the cause of their deaths was unclear.

For a full copy of the article visit www.australianprescriber.com.

To learn more about botulinum toxin speak to your doctor or pharmacist. People wanting to know about medical uses of botulinum toxin can also call the [NPS Medicines Line](tel:1300888763) on 1300 888 763 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm EST) and speak to a pharmacist for the cost of a local call (mobile calls may cost more).

If botulinum toxin is consumed, call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26.

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