

# BOTOX FOR MIGRAINES



## What is Botox?

Botox is a purified protein derived from Botulinum A, a bacterium. Tiny needles are used to inject it into muscles of the face, scalp, and across the top of the shoulders according to a well-defined protocol. After 2 weeks the full effect is evident: relaxed muscles which no longer pull too hard, and migraines from this cause go away.

## How often will I need these injections?

Botox usually lasts for about 12 weeks. You will need to come in for re-injection about once every 3 months.

## Are the injections painful?

Botox doesn't require anesthesia and is quick to inject. Botox is injected with a fine needle into specific muscles and you should only experience minor discomfort.

## How does Botox work?

The purified protein blocks signals from nerves to muscles, by not allowing the necessary chemical release needed to trigger a muscle contraction. Once the muscles are in a relaxed state, they stop triggering the pain of migraine.

## Is Botox covered by MSP?

No, not for migraine. However, the good news is that many extended medical plans cover at least 80% of the cost of the Botox itself. However, the procedural fee for injecting is billed to you privately. A few extended medical plans will reimburse you for this fee too but you will need to check with your individual plan first. You will be given a receipt each time you come for an appointment.

## What is the process to find out if Botox will work for me?

The first step is to obtain a referral from your family physician (or walk-in clinic). The initial consultation is covered by MSP; you will be assessed to determine if your headaches are such that you qualify for Botox injections. If you have a private extended medical plan then a pharmacy (we use Vital Health Pharmacy in Kelowna) can apply to your health insurance plan on your behalf. If this is approved by your insurer, the vials are sent to our clinic and your treatment can begin. You can of course choose to have Botox regardless of coverage, but you would then be responsible for paying all the fees (medication and procedure) yourself.

**EntheoMed**

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### Are there any complications?

Complications of Botox treatments are not common. Side effects of Botox injections include some "treatment stiffness" from having injections, and headache. Some patients may notice a temporary muscle weakness in the neck and upper shoulders, resolving usually within a few days. Very rarely if Botox diffuses beyond the injection site, it is possible to experience minor muscle weakness, vision changes, and drooping eyelids, all of which are temporary; there are precautions taken to significantly reduce the chance of this happening.