

# Botox for wrinkles? Botox for headaches? Is this the right solution for you?

Botox is a trade name for botulinum toxin A. Basically, the botulinum toxins block the nerve signals that instruct your muscles to contract. So why would

anyone want to purposely inject such a dangerous substance into their body? The answer is simple: if a muscle is paralyzed, it cannot move; if it cannot move, it cannot

wrinkle. Thus, Botox works by freezing the muscles that cause wrinkles. In addition to cosmetic reasons, Botox has also been sought out to treat chronic migraines and

even TMJ symptoms. There are advantages and disadvantages to all treatments, and Botox definitely has its pros and cons, but is it the right solution for you?



**Dentally Speaking**

by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

their chin. They have lost the height and support of their teeth, which results in a collapsed bite, loss of facial soft tissue support, and reveals the cruelty of the aging process. What is really amazing is when we rebuild these worn

Botox has been used for years, however, it has only been FDA approved since 2002 for cosmetic purposes. In 2010, it was approved to treat chronic migraines in patients that have 15 or more days per month with headaches lasting four hours a day or longer but only for people 65 years old or younger. It is not approved for treating TMJ symptoms like headaches, jaw pain, neck pain, or ringing in the ears and is considered experimental at this point. And although providing symptomatic relief, Botox is only masking these symptoms and never addressing the root cause.

down teeth and restore that facial support. The result is that a person can look 10 years younger, and more importantly, is restored to a higher level of health permanently. So instead of the illusion of a younger face and smoother skin, we are restoring a person's facial support and actually giving them a "non-surgical facelift."

**Headaches and TMJ:** 90% of all TMJ symptoms are muscular in nature so many people have turned to Botox as a potential treatment for TMJ disorders. Botox has become a popular treatment for acute relief in TMJ patients, but unfortunately it merely masks the root cause of TMJ pain and other symptoms. Presently, Botox is not approved by the FDA for use in treating TMJ disorders; however, because it stops muscle contraction, it can relieve muscular tension and pain in the facial muscles. This could be beneficial for clenchers in an acute muscular pain situation.

So why turn to Botox? cosmetics? For cosmetic purposes, Botox can treat wrinkles and lines around your eyes, on your forehead and on the rest of your face. Botox blocks signals from the nerves to the muscles. When a muscle gets injected, it no longer contracts. This causes the wrinkles to relax and soften. However, this effect on the muscles is temporary. Botox will wear off in approximately three to six months, which means repeatedly returning for injections and ongoing costs.

Botox shuts down the facial muscle fibers injected for three to four months, but in the meantime new muscle fibers can grow in an attempt to carry on the tasks of chewing, movement, and facial expression. Now when the Botox wears off, there could be an imbalance of muscle mass and an asymmetrical response to the task the muscles were intended for. In addition, further deterioration of the TMJs will continue despite the patient feeling "comfortable."

Is there a more permanent solution? What most people don't realize is how much your teeth support the surrounding facial and neck muscles. As we get older and our teeth become worn down, the area between the nose and the chin starts to shorten in length increasing wrinkles and creases in the face. The exaggerated version of this is when older people lose their teeth, remove their dentures, and their nose almost touches

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Continued on page 13