

The Botox Craze  
By Alice Levine

Have you ever noticed that your friend looks great, but you can't quite decide why? This "just back from vacation" look is often thanks to Botox, which has rapidly become one of the most popular minimally invasive cosmetic procedures performed in the United States.

Botox is a prescription medicine that is injected into the muscles between the eyebrows to temporarily block nerve impulses and reduce muscle activity that causes lines to form between the brows. The result is elimination or lessening of wrinkles, as these muscles relax. It's relatively fast procedure performed by a physician on an outpatient basis, thus earning the nickname "lunchtime procedure".

Results often last anywhere from three to as long as six months, depending on muscle mass and depth of facial expressions. Prices range from about \$300 to \$600, and like other cosmetic procedures, Botox is not covered by insurance. While the eyebrow area is the most popular, Botox is also used to treat "crow's feet" and forehead wrinkles.

Dr. Anca Tchelebi, founder of Park Avenue Medical Spa in Armonk, agreed that Botox is by far the most popular cosmetic procedure that she performs. Dr Tchelebi explained, "Botox offers the best immediate results. It offers instant gratification and dramatic improvement. It makes you look more relaxed, fresh and less tired-looking."

Dr. Tchelebi also added that Botox has a long, successful track record, and is considered a very safe procedure. Serious side effects are rare, but many people still have "cold feet", often after hearing stories about mishaps with Botox. Dr. Tchelebi explained that these accidents are usually a result of inexperience and the use of a Botox-like substance, rather than the patented product from Allergan. Allergan manufactures Botox, which is an FDA-approved, prescription medication. Dr. Tchelebi cautioned, "Sometimes people are looking for deals. They have Botox performed at non-reputable facilities, with practitioners who may not be using Botox from Allergan. This is usually when accidents occur." She added that Botox is a medical procedure, and clients should keep this in mind when choosing a doctor for the Botox procedure.

What are some things on the horizon with Botox? Initial results with Botox in a cream form are promising. For those who want the results but dread the needles, this could be just what they've been waiting for.

Dr. Tchelebi added that those considering Botox should not wait too long. She explained, "You don't want to wait until you have very deep wrinkles. You want to be proactive and begin early. If wrinkles become too deep, it may be impossible to obtain the results you want."

I spoke with several middle-aged women who have the procedure performed two or three times a year. They preferred not to give their names for the article. All the women agreed that the Botox procedure is easy and fast, and they all loved seeing the positive results so

quickly. They also love how Botox makes their faces look more relaxed, without any bruising. One of the women in the group commented, "I love Botox because if you have the right person do it, it gives your face a really relaxed look. It makes your face look refreshed, not frozen. And I'm in and out of my doctor's office in fifteen minutes."

While many people are uncomfortable sharing that they've had the procedure, this certainly is not deterring them from making Botox a regular part of their skin care regimen. Perhaps the beauty of Botox lies in its results: friends will often notice you look great, but they probably will not know why.