

DOES Botox DESERVE TO BE MAINSTREAM

LAST YEAR, IT was noted that there was an explosion of Botox popularity with soccer moms and investment bankers, people who might normally get a facial or a massage only a few times a year. Botox is threatening to become as common as manicures.

But is it safe for such a treatment to enter into the local day-spa arena? Is this non-surgical, pseudo-face-lift a dream come true? Isn't it unhealthy, on some level, to inject a form of poison into your system simply for vanity's sake? And, what about the stories of Botox overdoses leading to frozen faces or wrinkles somewhere else?

What sparked the mainstream interest in Botox a year ago was FDA approval for use. Patricia Wexler, M.D., a Manhattan dermatologic surgeon

eyebrows to temporarily smooth out expression lines. Now, Botox is used to improve neck elasticity, crows feet, lip lines, migraines, and sweating in the palms and underarms.

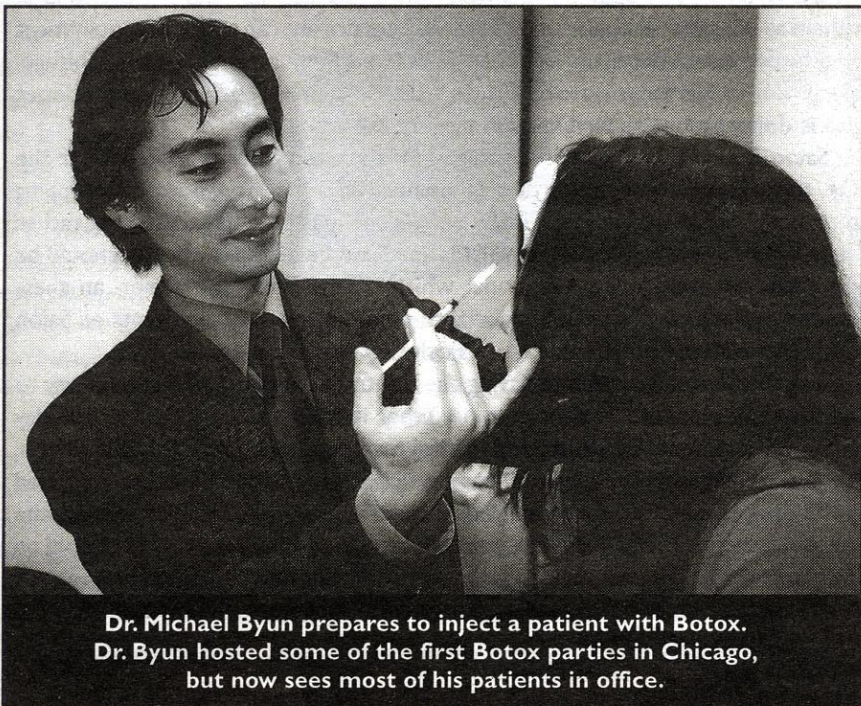
When asked whether the "frozen face syndrome" is a bygone side effect of Botox, Wexler states it can still happen if someone is "over-Botoxed."

beginning Botox treatments when lines first appear. Dr. Byun says it's a fact that if you relax one part of your face, other muscles will compensate and become stronger. However, this shouldn't be a problem if the physician administering Botox is experienced.

The best Botox candidates, according to Dr. Wexler, are those people who don't want to look angry or tired. Her clients range in age from twenty to seventy, with occupations that span schoolteacher to news anchor. Dr. Wexler won't treat just anyone, though. Those who are pregnant, have a neuromuscular disease, are allergic to egg whites, or simply have too much elasticity in their skin are generally recommended to try other anti-aging treatments.

Dr. Byun concurs and says that he wouldn't recommend Botox to anyone whose aging process is too advanced or someone who has horizontal forehead lines due to gravity. In the latter scenario, Botox will only relax the muscles and make the lines deepen. Because the injections are in such a diluted form, there is no risk of being infected with botulism from Botox treatments, nor is there a long recovery period. (The skin may appear reddish, but it will not become numb). However, if you're going to try Botox, it's important to keep your head upright for six hours after the treatment. In addition you shouldn't exercise, wear a hat, or wash, blow-dry or color your hair for at least one day after your treatment. Lastly, try not to fly for two days before or after the injection.

So with all the recognized benefits, is it safe for Botox to be available at your neighborhood spa? That depends



Dr. Michael Byun prepares to inject a patient with Botox. Dr. Byun hosted some of the first Botox parties in Chicago, but now sees most of his patients in office.

with numerous celebrities on her patient roster, has been treating cosmetic patients with Botox for over a decade now. The procedure, she explains, which takes only a few minutes and works by injecting Botox into a facial muscle with a small needle, differs from its use 10 years ago, when the injections were used as a treatment for eye muscle spasm. As doctors noticed reduced wrinkles in the treatment areas, they began using it on the forehead and between the

The only way to avoid it is to make sure you have the right doctor. The trick, according to Dr. Michael Byun, plastic surgeon and the owner of Chicago Cosmetic Surgery, is to relax the injected muscle 50-60% rather than 100%, and have treatments more than 90 days apart.

If you act sooner rather than later, says Dr. Byun, you'll relax the muscle that's causing the wrinkles, and they won't deepen as fast. In order to prevent lines, he recommends

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on who is administering the Botox, says Natalie Tessler, owner of the acclaimed SpaSpace in Chicago's West Loop. "Right now it's a medical rather than a salon procedure, and unless there are trained doctors on hand to administer the Botox shots, it is not advisable to have it done in a spa setting." Instead, Ms. Tessler recommends microdermabrasion or glycolic peels, along with a home regimen of AHAs (alpha hydroxy acids) and topical Vitamin C.

Patty Longnecker, owner of Harbor

Country Day Spa in New Buffalo, Michigan also leaves Botox out of her spa menu. "I prefer the more holistic approach to beauty," she says. "And I'm finding that the more people get Botox, the more everyone begins to look alike."

That sentiment hasn't deterred salons and physician groups around the country from trying to make getting Botox an easy, even festive, event.

Dr. Byun says he appears at Botox parties occasionally and prefers to look at them as educational opportunities where a participant can make an appointment for a future date. Dr. Byun has been contacted by numerous spas in Chicago, asking him to perform Botox at their sites or supervise a nurse practitioner who is doing so, but so far Dr. Byun prefers the office setting.

Salon 530 of New Buffalo, Michigan also started offering Botox after the FDA approval last year. According to owner Karla Madison, Botox is cropping up as a day spa service because many people see it as a beauty treatment, rather than a medical procedure. However, Ms. Madison believes that Botox should be performed by a medical professional, which is why Dr. Paul Madison, an anesthesiologist and pain medicine specialist, administers the treatments at Salon 530. Also offering Botox services is Posh Day Spa in LaPorte, Indiana.

If you're truly interested in having the treatment performed, the best way to find the right physician in your area (whether it be at a doctor's office or a day spa) is through word of mouth and careful research. Make sure that the doctor you choose is board certified and has participated in advanced courses offered by the drug companies. Although it may seem a very simple way to smooth the skin, don't forget, this is a medical procedure, and all such procedures should be taken seriously. Despite the apparent commonality, this isn't your average spa treatment, and we don't expect it to replace manicures anytime soon. ♦



Patty Longnecker, owner of the Harbor Country Day Spa, doesn't offer Botox, preferring a more holistic approach to beauty.

Is Radiance Next?

NOW THAT BOTOX is becoming commonplace, what's the next big thing in the war against aging? According to Dr. Michael Byun of Chicago Cosmetic Surgery, it's Radiance, a longer lasting collagen-like product. It has been approved by the FDA for soft tissue marker and vocal chord injection use, and approval for cosmetic use is thought to be on its way. Dr. Byun was the first physician to utilize Radiance in the Midwest, and he says that it can be used for such things as puffing up the nasolabial folds (on the side of the mouth) or nasojugal folds (the deep dark circles from the cheek to the lower lid).