

OnabotulinumtoxinA for Migraine

Botulinum toxin type A is a neurotoxin that causes a temporary cessation of nerve activity. It lasts 2-4 months.

For migraine, the strategy is to give multiple injections (30-40) in those specific regions of the head and neck. Although it is not known exactly how it works, the current understanding is it is absorbed into the sensory nerves, as well as blocks the nerve function to muscles. It takes 2-3 days before it will reduce pain.

Is it appropriate for me?

Any adult (18-65) who is suffering from 15 or more headaches per month for at least three months. There are some exceptions for people with at least 4 severe prolonged migraine attacks per month.

It should not be used in individuals with

- known hypersensitivity to any ingredient in the formulation (anaphylaxis, urticaria, soft-tissue edema, and dyspnea)
- neuromuscular disease

What are the risks?

Most common (immediate)

- Pain of injections
- Bruising at injection sites
- Drooping of eyebrows (asymmetry) – will take months to resolve

More serious (after many series of injections)

- Muscle wasting – causing temple hollowing or neck weakness

Recommend

- Keep head elevated for 3-6 hours after injections to keep the injected fluid symmetric
- Apply pressure or ice if any bruising, as soon as possible
- May use make-up to cover any bruising