

Does Botox Give You Clear Skin?

Botox is a well-known treatment for getting rid of dynamic wrinkles. These are the lines that form around the face such as the horizontal lines across the forehead, crow's feet around the eyes, and the "11" between the eyebrows.

But can Botox clear your skin? While it can definitely help manage acne, most doctors would prefer to recommend something else. This article will explain how Botox injections can help clean up facial acne, and discuss other remedies for acne.

What Is Botox For?

Botox is derived from *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacteria that produces the substance called botulinum toxin. This neurotoxin is diluted in saline, which creates the cosmetic toxin. When used as a beauty treatment, Botox injections temporarily paralyze muscles by preventing the nerves from releasing acetylcholine, the neurotransmitter that controls muscle contraction.

The muscles in the injected area relax, which is how people who use Botox get tighter skin, smoothed wrinkles, frown lines, and forehead creases. These effects aren't permanent, lasting only for an average of 3-4 months. Additional injections are usually recommended by doctors and cosmetic surgeons for more consistent results.

Does Botox Work On Acne?

Cosmetic surgeons and dermatologists would normally recommend a different route of treatment for acne, since excessive Botox use may result in the permanent paralysis of facial muscles. Paralyzed muscles lead to an uneven expression, inability to express emotion, and drooped eyebrows.

However, Botox can still be used to prevent pimples from occurring as it reduces sweating and keeps the skin looking young and vibrant. Botox keeps the skin from getting too oily, on top of smoothing and tightening the epidermis. Under your dermatologist's supervision, this cosmetic toxin might provide some improvements on your acne problem, given that this isn't used as a stand-alone, long-term treatment.

How Botox Decreases Oil Production

When pores are blocked by oil, bacteria, dead cells, and dirt, the buildup develops into a pimple or a zit. Pores also tend to get larger as you age, since the structure of the epidermis around it sags. Larger pores lead to oilier skin, which then lead to a buildup of sebum and bacteria. Not only does this result in pimples, they may also become blackheads if the oil oxidizes.

Since sweat releases the sebaceous oils that clog these pores, a Botox treatment can address hyperhidrosis, or excessive sweating. Injecting the cosmetic toxin into the face helps the muscles relax and blocks the nerve that signals the sweat glands, which inhibits sweating functions temporarily. Once the Botox's effects wear off and the facial nerves sprout and reconnect with the sweat glands, the sweating functions return.

This effect has been studied by doctors, who have found that people who get Botox reduced their sebum production by around 30%. In one study conducted, patients who were injected with a single dose of Botox observed a decrease of pore size and oil production in the injected areas.

Beyond Acne: How Botox Boosts Collagen and Elastin

On top of helping with excessive sweating, Botox treatments can also promote the production of elastin and collagen, both of which aid the facial skin's elasticity. The presence of collagen and elastin in the epidermis is what keeps skin tight, firm, and flexible.

Elastin and Collagen: What Do They Do?

Elastin is the protein in your epidermis that is highly elastic. It is present in connective tissues, allowing the tissues inside the body to revert to their original shape after stretching or contracting. Elastin is present in the quality of the skin that can go back to its original position after being poked or pinched.

On the other hand, collagen is the most abundant protein in the body. It's the protein that provides structure for the epidermis and helps blood clot. Collagen is thought to be the "glue" that holds the body together, and is a major building block for the bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments.

As people age, the body's elastin and collagen production declines, leaving the epidermis to sag. This decline is also attributed as a factor to getting enlarged pores, which causes acne to develop.

How Botox Improves the Skin

One study found that Botox can promote the production of elastin and collagen in the epidermis. Dr. James Bonaparte and his colleagues examined this effect when they gave injections to 48 women with an average age of 55. The Botox increased the stretchiness and elasticity of the women's skin, which gave them a more youthful appearance for three to four months, until the effects of the cosmetic toxin wore off.

Although it was thought that this was caused by swelling from the injections themselves, the doctors suspect this is an intrinsic quality of the epidermis. Dr. Bonaparte believes that the cells producing elastin and collagen may contain a receptor that responds to Botox. Other doctors have also theorized that the cosmetic toxin was used as an antioxidant in the epidermis tissue, which allowed it to recover from the damage caused by waste products on the face.

Another theory was that the temporary paralysis caused by the Botox let collagen and elastin recover from being constantly in motion, and allowed it to settle back into the face.

Other Skin-Clearing Treatments

If you're unsure if Botox is the right treatment for treating your acne problems, there are other ways to keep your face clear and healthy:

Retinoid treatment: Retinoids have been an approved treatment for many skin conditions since 1971. Applying retinoids results in unclogged pores, and can even reduce the formation of acne scars.

Laser therapy: There are a variety of laser therapy courses available, but laser light generally helps reduce the bacteria that causes acne. Currently, results differ based on the patient and it may take several sessions before the acne clears up.

Chemical peels and microdermabrasion: By removing the top peel of your skin, chemical peels and microdermabrasion help remove the dead cells and sebum that clogs up the pores. This takes care of breakouts for pimples, whiteheads and blackheads.

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