

Best areas of the face for Botox treatment

Botox treatment is better suited for some facial areas than for others. The upper face is the most commonly treated region and includes three areas of wrinkling: the frown lines, the horizontal forehead wrinkles, and the “crow's feet” wrinkles in the temple area to the side of the eyes. These three facial areas are highly visible and improving wrinkling here has a greater impact than in less visible areas.

In all cases, Botox treatment improves dynamic wrinkling, which is wrinkling that becomes more prominent with muscle contraction. Static wrinkles are the wrinkles that are visible when the muscles are at rest and are caused over many years by the folding of the skin that occurs during dynamic wrinkling (muscle contraction). Static wrinkles are a feature of the skin's texture and will not improve unless the skin is directly treated with a “filler” injection (such as hyaluronic acid) or with a surgical resurfacing (most commonly laser resurfacing). Dr. Langdon himself is a great example of the synergy between Botox and laser resurfacing. He underwent CO2 laser resurfacing of his frown lines in 1995 and, ever since, has done Botox injections in this area (on himself!) every three or four months. He still has no static wrinkles in the frown line area even after 24 years because he has prevented these wrinkles from returning by keeping the frown muscles relaxed with repeated Botox treatments.

The frown line area (referred to as the glabella) is the best (and most cost-effective) facial area to treat with Botox. Muscles in this area can be totally relaxed, thus preventing the angry look that results from frowning (this is an example of dynamic wrinkling). The primary frown muscles are the corrugators; when these muscles contract, they pull the eyebrows closer together and cause vertical frown lines. Total relaxation (paralysis) of the corrugator muscles prevents frowning and is not associated with any undesirable side effects.

There is even evidence of a psychological benefit to Botox treatment of the frown lines. Because frowning makes people appear angry (even if they aren't), it portrays a negative emotion that produces similarly negative feelings in onlookers. Studies have shown that people who are depressed improve after they are treated with Botox in the frown line area. It is thought that people with whom these Botox recipients interact behave more positively toward them because they are no longer frowning. Some studies have even found a reduced need for antidepressant medication in these Botox-treated patients.

Another common upper facial area treated with Botox is the forehead, where horizontal wrinkles result from activity of the frontalis muscle, the muscle that lifts the eyebrows. Botox treatment of the frontalis can be excessive if these muscles (there is one on each side of the forehead) are totally paralyzed. Although the horizontal forehead wrinkles will be much improved after total paralysis of the frontalis muscles, the eyebrows will sink and the upper eyelids will appear to have more droopy skin. Also, the forehead will appear elongated and the patient will appear unnaturally expressionless. For this reason, the goal of Botox treatment of the frontalis muscles should be partial paralysis. This will significantly improve the horizontal forehead wrinkles but still allow some frontalis muscle activity so that the eyebrows will not sink too much.

The third commonly treated area of the upper face is the "crow's feet" area. The wrinkles to the side of the eye are caused by squinting, in which the lateral part of the orbicularis oculi muscle contracts (this round muscle completely encircles the eye). Botox improves these wrinkles by inhibiting the ability to squint. Many people will get indirect wrinkling in the crow's feet area when they smile. This is because the "smile muscles" push the cheek upwards toward the temple. In some cases, Botox treatment of the upper part of the strongest "smile muscle," the zygomaticus major muscle, can help reduce crow's feet wrinkles that worsen with smiling.

Dynamic wrinkles in three high-visibility areas of the face—the frown lines, the horizontal forehead wrinkles, and the “crow's feet” wrinkles—can all be improved by the use of Botox, creating a refreshed and relaxed look.