

Dr Ravi C. Ratnavel DM (Oxon) FRCP (UK)

PATIENT INFORMATION

TREATMENT OF AXILLARY HYPERHIDROSIS BY BOTOX INJECTIONS

Unwanted excess perspiration under the arms is known as Axillary Hyperhidrosis. Botulinum Toxin (otherwise known as 'Botox') is a very successful treatment for axillary hyperhidrosis, given by superficial injections into the skin. It is licensed in the UK for this medical indication. This drug has been used for many years to treat muscle spasms affecting the face, eyes and neck and for foot problems in children with cerebral palsy. It is also used for cosmetic purposes.

When Botox protein is injected into the skin under the arms, it blocks the nerves that supply the eccrine glands and this prevents the glands from producing sweat. Botox permanently blocks the nerve endings, but over about 6-12 weeks, new nerve endings grow to replace them. This means that the effects of the treatment last for a few months and is not curative. However, further treatment may be performed as required.

Dr Ratnavel has performed Botox injections for over 10 years and has a large cohort of satisfied patients. Treatment takes about 20 minutes and can be performed at the initial consultation if patients are familiar with the procedure. Although hyperhidrosis is recognized to be a distressing medical condition, not all insurers will fund treatment (but it is worth checking).

This treatment is usually very successful for the axillae. However, some patients have rarely experienced an increase in sweating in another part of the body following treatment. Occasionally, flu-like symptoms occur but disappear within a few days. The treated sites can also be a bit sore for a while. Occasionally a small amount of Botox may spread out following injection and cause temporary weakness of the arm.

Botox is not suitable for those who are allergic to any of its contents or for those who are pregnant. Those on antibiotics or any drugs used as muscle relaxants should also not have treatment.