

Patient Information

Botulinum Toxin Injections for Laryngeal Dystonia

What is Laryngeal Dystonia?

Laryngeal dystonia (also known as *spasmodic dysphonia*) is a rare voice disorder caused by involuntary spasms in the muscles of the voice box (larynx). These spasms can cause your voice to:

- Sound tight, strangled, or broken (adductor type)
- Sound weak and breathy (abductor type)
- Fluctuate between both (mixed type)

Laryngeal dystonia can significantly affect how you communicate, but there is effective treatment available.

What is Botulinum Toxin (BoNT-A)?

Botulinum toxin is a purified protein that temporarily relaxes overactive muscles. It's commonly used in both medical and cosmetic treatments.

In laryngeal dystonia, very small amounts of botulinum toxin are injected into specific muscles of the voice box to reduce the spasms and improve the voice.

How Does the Procedure Work?

Before the Procedure

- You may be asked to avoid certain medications (like blood thinners) before the injection — your doctor will advise you.
- You'll usually be seated or lying down comfortably.
- No general anaesthetic is needed — local anaesthetic may be used.

During the Procedure

- A small needle is inserted into the affected muscle of your larynx (usually through the skin of your neck).
- A specialist may use EMG (a machine that measures muscle activity) to guide the injection accurately.
- You may be asked to make sounds or speak during the procedure.

The procedure typically takes about **10–15 minutes**, and most people can go home shortly afterwards.

What Should I Expect After the Injection?

It's normal to experience:

- A weak, breathy, or hoarse voice for a few days to 2 weeks
- Mild swallowing difficulties, especially with thin liquids
- Temporary changes in pitch or voice quality

These effects are expected and usually settle down as the toxin takes effect.

When Will I Notice a Difference?

- Voice improvement usually begins **3 to 7 days** after the injection.
 - Maximum benefit is often seen by **2 to 4 weeks**.
 - The effects typically last **4 months** — repeat injections are usually needed for ongoing benefit.
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What Are the Benefits?

- Smoother, more natural voice
- Reduced voice strain and fatigue
- Improved communication and quality of life

Most people experience significant voice improvement after treatment.

Are There Any Risks or Side Effects?

Botulinum toxin is generally very safe when used in small doses by experienced specialists. Possible side effects include:

- Temporary hoarseness or breathy voice
- Mild swallowing problems
- Sore throat or mild discomfort at the injection site
- Rarely, the injection may need to be repeated if the dose needs adjusting

Serious side effects are extremely rare.

Follow-up and Repeat Treatments

- You'll usually be asked to feed back to your doctor a few weeks after the injection to assess your response.
 - Repeat injections are typically given every **4 months**, depending on your symptoms and needs.
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When to Seek Medical Advice

Please contact your doctor or clinic if you experience:

- Difficulty swallowing food or liquids that worsens
 - Breathing problems
 - High fever, significant pain, or swelling in the neck
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Further Information

If you have any concerns or need further advice, please contact your healthcare provider.