

Patient Information

Botulinum Toxin Injection into the Cricopharyngeus Muscle

(Percutaneous Approach with EMG Guidance)

Why Am I Being Offered This Treatment?

You are being offered a **botulinum toxin injection into the cricopharyngeus muscle** to treat:

- **Cricopharyngeal Spasm**

This is when the cricopharyngeal muscle (part of the upper oesophageal sphincter) becomes overly tight, making it hard to swallow and creating a feeling of something "stuck" in the throat.

- **Retrograde Cricopharyngeal Dysfunction (R-CPD)**

This is a condition where the cricopharyngeal muscle doesn't relax to allow **burping**. It can lead to:

- Inability to burp
- Bloating or gurgling in the chest/throat
- Abdominal discomfort
- Excessive flatulence

Botulinum toxin helps by **relaxing** the cricopharyngeal muscle, allowing normal swallowing or burping to occur.

Please note that this treatment for R-CPD is not currently funded by the NHS.

What is Botulinum Toxin?

Botulinum toxin (BoNT-A) is a well-established medicine used to temporarily **weaken overactive muscles**. It's commonly used in both medical and cosmetic procedures and is highly effective in treating muscle spasms.

How is the Injection Done?

This procedure is performed **through the skin of the neck**, using a thin needle. It is guided by **EMG (electromyography)**, which uses electrical signals to accurately target the correct muscle.

What Happens During the Procedure:

- You'll be asked to lie on your back in a comfortable position.
- The skin on your neck is cleaned, and a small amount of **local anaesthetic** may be used to numb the area.
- A fine needle is inserted into the neck and guided into the cricopharyngeal muscle using **EMG monitoring**. You may be asked to swallow or perform small movements to help locate the muscle.
- Once the correct position is confirmed, a small amount of **botulinum toxin** is injected.

The entire procedure usually takes **15 to 20 minutes**.

What Happens After the Injection?

- You'll usually be observed for a short time and then allowed to go home the same day.
 - Your throat may feel a little sore or "tight" for a day or two.
 - You may be advised to eat **soft food** for the first 24–48 hours.
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If you're being treated for cricopharyngeal spasm:

- Swallowing often feels easier within **3 to 7 days**.

If you're being treated for R-CPD:

- Most people begin to **burp for the first time** within a few days to a week.
 - Bloating and gurgling typically improve significantly.
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How Long Do the Effects Last?

- The effects of the botulinum toxin typically last **3 to 6 months**.
 - Some people may need **repeat injections** if symptoms return.
 - In cases of **R-CPD**, one injection may be enough to permanently "reset" the muscle for long-term benefit.
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Are There Any Side Effects?

Most people tolerate this procedure very well. However, like any treatment, side effects can occur.

Common (usually mild and short-lived):

- Mild neck discomfort or soreness
- Temporary changes in swallowing (slight coughing or choking on thin liquids)
- Mild hoarseness or throat tightness

Rare:

- Difficulty swallowing solid food (usually temporary)
 - Infection or bruising at the injection site
 - Noisy breathing (very rare)
 - Allergic reaction (very rare)
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Follow-Up

You will usually be asked to feed back to your doctor within a few weeks to review your response to treatment. Further treatment can be planned if needed.

When Should I Seek Medical Help?

Please contact your doctor or attend A&E if you experience:

- Difficulty swallowing saliva or liquids persistently
 - Breathing difficulty
 - High fever or signs of infection
 - Severe neck pain or swelling
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Summary

- This is a quick, safe, and minimally invasive procedure.
 - It can significantly reduce symptoms of swallowing difficulty or inability to burp.
 - Most people notice improvement within **a few days**.
 - Side effects are usually mild and short-lived.
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Further Information

www.sevas.co.uk

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