

## Australians trial Botox to treat hay fever

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The best-selling wrinkle erasing drug Botox will be used in an Australian study to treat hay fever, researchers said Tuesday after it showed promise in providing relief in early trials.

Philip Bardin, a professor at the Monash Medical Centre which is linked to Melbourne's Monash University, said Botox was already widely used in medicine to reduce spasms in muscles following strokes and in treating cerebral palsy.

"This is very new way to use an old medication," he said.

Under the trial, a Botox gel will be applied to the nose to hopefully give hay fever sufferers relief from sneezing, itchy eyes and runny noses for up to three months.

"Part of why this is possible is that the Botox molecule has been re-engineered to be able to penetrate through the skin but also through the lining of the nose," Bardin told AFP.

"That's really the crucial development that has taken place. So consequently it is going to be possible in the future to extend its use from being mostly a cosmetic product... to become possibly even more useful."

In treating hay fever, the [botulinum toxin](#) will affect the nerves in the nose and potentially block some of the chemicals released by the [nerve endings](#) which play a large role in causing symptoms, he said.

Seventy people will be recruited for the study following a preliminary trial that suggested the drug provided relief.

Botox, which makes muscles relax, is a purified form of a [nerve poison](#) produced by a bacteria that causes a disease which paralyses muscles and can be fatal.

It was first used to treat disorders of the [eye muscle](#)—uncontrollable blinking and misaligned eyes.

Its cosmetic use took off in the 1990s after a Canadian [ophthalmologist](#) noticed her patients were losing their frown lines after using the medication.

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