

Expert explains how Botox injections help relieve chronic migraine

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Chronic migraines can be debilitating and can significantly impact sufferers' quality of life. But over the past few years, botulinum toxin

injections (known by the brand name Botox) have decreased the number of headache days for many people who found little relief from other treatment options.

UConn Health's Dr. Bernardo Rodrigues and Elaine Cornean, APRN, explain how the injections can help chronic [migraine](#) sufferers and who could benefit from this treatment.

Q. How do Botox injections help with migraines, and how do you know if someone is a candidate to receive them?

Botox blocks the messages from the nerve to the muscle, causing temporary muscle relaxation. While no one understands precisely why Botox helps with migraines, it was FDA approved in 2010 and is considered safe and effective for the treatment of [chronic migraines](#). A good candidate is someone who is 18 or older who suffers from chronic migraines, with headaches occurring at least 15 days per month who has not had success controlling them with other treatment options.

Q. What is the treatment like?

The treatment for chronic migraines is a quick and simple outpatient procedure. There is no need for [anesthesia](#), and there are no restrictions after the procedure. The provider uses fine needle injections that target the most common areas affected by headaches, such as the forehead, temples, back of the head, neck, and shoulders. The total visit time is around 15 minutes. The treatment with Botox is repeated every three months, and patients experience, on average, eight to nine fewer headache days per month than before treatment. You do not need to change your current medications before the procedure, and you can receive Botox injections in addition to other treatments for headaches.

Q. If someone thinks Botox might help their migraines, how can they seek treatment?

If you have a diagnosis of chronic migraines that is not well controlled with your medications, and you still have 15 or more headache days per month, you can ask your neurologist or [primary care physician](#) to refer you to our UConn Health Botox Clinic. If you do not have a confirmed diagnosis of chronic migraines, you should first see a neurologist. We can help you find a headache specialist here at UConn Health.

Provided by University of Connecticut

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