

Dysport®

(botulinum toxin) injection for adult spasticity

This leaflet explains more about having a Dysport® injection for the treatment of spasticity. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the injection as well as what to expect when you come to hospital. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the doctor or physiotherapist caring for you.

What is a Dysport® injection?

Dysport® contains botulinum toxin which works by stopping muscles contracting. It is used to treat muscle spasms in different areas of the body. It is given as an injection into the affected muscle(s) to produce temporary weakness and relaxation.

The effects of the Dysport® injection are temporary and will last between three and four months, after which they will gradually wear off.

Why should I have a Dysport® injection?

Dysport® has been shown to be a well tolerated and effective treatment for people with spasticity in a specific muscle or group of muscles. Spasticity is an abnormal increase in the tone of your muscles and is common following injury to the brain or spinal cord.

Dysport® is often used in addition to physiotherapy or occupational therapy for the management of spasticity. Your physiotherapist, occupational therapist or other healthcare professional will discuss the goals of your treatment with you.

Dysport® is licensed for treatment of spasticity affecting the arm muscles. However, it is not licensed for treatment of spasticity affecting other muscles or groups of muscles, such as the leg muscles. The leaflet, **Unlicensed medicines – a guide for patients**, has more information about unlicensed medicines. If you would like a copy, please ask a member of staff caring for you. Alternatively you can call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline – contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

What are the risks?

Like all medicines, Dysport® can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. Some of the more common side effects include:

- pain or bruising at the injection site
- flu-like symptoms (fatigue and headache)
- excessive muscle weakness
- skin rash/itchiness.

If you have any of the following symptoms, please seek immediate medical advice:

- problems swallowing, breathing or with your speech
- difficulty in breathing with or without swelling of the face, lips, tongue and/or throat, redness of the skin or an itchy lumpy rash (urticaria). This may mean you are having an allergic reaction to Dysport®.

You will be asked to wait in the clinic for a short time after you have been given the injection to check for any allergic reactions.

If you would like further information about side effects, please speak to the doctor or physiotherapist caring for you, or see the manufacturer's information leaflet that comes with the medicine (please ask us for a copy if you do not have one). Alternatively, you can call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline (contact details are at the end of the leaflet).

Can everyone have the injection?

You should not have the injection if you:

- are allergic to botulinum toxin or human albumin (blood product)
- have an infection at the injection site
- have had any botulinum toxin injection within the previous three months
- feel unwell
- are pregnant
- have a pre-existing neuromuscular disease
- are a Jehovah's witness
- do not want the injection.

It is very important that you let us know if you have had any recent injections of botulinum toxin (within the last three months), as giving two or more doses within this time frame may result in severe muscle weakness. If you take medicines to thin your blood, such as warfarin, or have a pre-existing swallowing problem, your suitability for the injection will be discussed with you.

Are there any alternatives?

Alternatives to the injection include oral (by mouth) anti-spasticity medications. These are however usually used to treat more generalised spasticity and they are associated with more side effects. If you would like further information on these medicines, please speak to your doctor or physiotherapist.

Consent - asking for your consent

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Will I need to do anything before the injection?

The injections are performed in the outpatient clinic by either the consultant or clinical specialist physiotherapist. They will ask you about any other medicines you are currently taking to make sure there will be no drug interactions or precautions that need to be considered before the injection. Otherwise there is nothing specific that you need to do before the injection.

What happens during the injection?

Once you have given your consent and the staff are happy that you are ready to go ahead, you will be placed in a comfortable position. The skin around the area to be injected will be cleaned with antiseptic. A needle is then gently inserted into the affected muscle(s) and the Dysport[®] solution is injected through the needle. A cotton swab is then placed over the site for a few minutes to minimise bleeding.

Will I feel any pain?

You may experience some mild discomfort when the Dysport[®] is being injected, though the injection itself is not particularly painful as the consultant and clinical specialist physiotherapist are thoroughly trained in this procedure. Sometimes the injection site can be sore for a few hours after the procedure.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be asked to wait for a short time after your injection to check for any reactions, after which you may go home. The toxin usually starts to work four to seven days after the injection and its peak effect can be seen after 10 to 14 days. The effect of the injection varies from person to person and usually continues to last for about three to four months.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You may be referred for physiotherapy or occupational therapy treatment following the injection. This may include doing some stretches to the injected muscle or having a special splint made to stretch the injected muscle. It is very important to follow the advice from the physiotherapist or occupational therapist, as this will maximise the effect of the botulinum toxin.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You may be asked to attend a follow-up appointment a few weeks after your injection to check your progress. Occasionally, more than one injection is needed and this can be discussed at this appointment.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about Dysport® (botulinum toxin) injections, please contact the Spasticity Clinic on **020 7188 5088** between 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. We will try to answer your query during these hours but you can also leave a message at anytime and one of the clinicians will contact you as soon as possible.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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