

Botulinum toxin A for treating focal spasticity of the upper or lower limbs in children with cerebral palsy

WHAT DOES THE GUIDANCE SAY?

Botulinum toxin A (Botox) is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government subsidy for treating focal spasticity of the upper and lower limbs in children with cerebral palsy.

WHAT IS FOCAL SPASTICITY?

Focal spasticity is a movement disorder which causes certain muscles to be tight or stiff as a result of damage to the nervous system. It causes pain and can affect limb movement, posture, balance, speed and flexibility. In children, focal spasticity may affect development of motor skills and impact their ability to perform daily activities. Prolonged spasticity may also result in uneven muscle growth, permanent muscle shortening and deformities.

WHAT IS BOTULINUM TOXIN A?

You may know botulinum toxin A as Botox[®], Dysport[®] or Xeomin[®]. It is given as a series of injections to help relax muscles affected by focal spasticity. Once the muscles are relaxed, patients can have physical therapy to strengthen the affected muscles, or have supportive devices, such as orthoses, fitted to improve the range of motion of the joint, and delay or reduce the need for surgery.

HOW MUCH BOTULINUM TOXIN A CAN I TAKE?

Your doctor will administer botulinum toxin A injections at affected areas at the required dose. The effects of the injection will start to work within a few days.

Muscle relaxation typically lasts for around 3 months and treatment is repeated when symptoms return.

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HOW LONG SHOULD I TAKE IT?

The effect of each botulinum toxin A injection usually lasts for about three months before wearing off. If you want to maintain the effect, you will need regular follow-up injections.

WHO CAN HAVE BOTULINUM TOXIN A?

Children with cerebral palsy aged 2 years or older with focal spasticity of the upper or lower limbs (including dynamic equinus foot deformity) may apply for botulinum toxin type A (Botox) through the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF).

Your doctor can advise if Botox is a suitable treatment for you.

WHY WAS BOTULINUM TOXIN A RECOMMENDED FOR MAF?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Botulinum toxin A (Botox) was recommended for subsidy because its benefit in relieving symptoms and improving quality of life for children with focal spasticity justifies its cost. The other brands of botulinum toxin A (Dysport and Xeomin) were not recommended for subsidy.

WHAT DOES LISTING ON THE MAF MEAN FOR ME?

The MAF helps people pay for expensive treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes botulinum toxin type A (Botox) for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

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