

Plain English Summary

Botulinum toxin A for preventing headaches in adults with chronic migraine

What does the guidance say?

Botulinum toxin type A (Botox) is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government subsidy for preventing headaches in adults with chronic migraine.

Other brands of botulinum toxin type A (Dysport and Xeomin) are not recommended for subsidy.

What is chronic migraine?

Migraine is severe pain that often occurs in one side of the head and lasts for several hours or days. Symptoms of migraine can include nausea, dizziness, vomiting or increased sensitivity to light, noise, or smell.

When someone has headaches for at least 15 days each month (of which 8 days are with migraine) for more than 3 months, this is called chronic migraine.

What is botulinum toxin A?

You may know botulinum toxin A as Botox, Dysport or Xeomin. Botulinum toxin A belongs to a group of medicines called neuromuscular blockers which help to relax muscles and block the release of chemical signals that cause pain.

How much botulinum toxin A can I take?

If you have chronic migraine, your doctor will give you a series of botulinum toxin A injections into specific head and neck muscles at the required dose. The effect of treatment usually lasts for about 3 months. Most people with chronic migraine will need to repeat their treatment every 3 months when symptoms return.

Your doctor will regularly assess if botulinum toxin A is working for you and if you are likely to benefit from continued treatment.

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Who can have botulinum toxin A?

Adults with chronic migraine can have botulinum toxin A (Botox) if:

- their symptoms have not improved after taking at least 3 other migraine treatments; or
- they are not able to take other migraine treatments.

Your doctor can advise if botulinum toxin A 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 because its benefit in preventing headaches for certain adults with chronic migraine justifies its cost.

Dysport and Xeomin were not considered for MAF because they have not been approved to treat chronic migraine.

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 A (Botox) for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

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