

# Botox VS. Aspirin Which is Safer?

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WOLFGANG WORDS BY STEVEN H. DAYAN, MD, FACS

**B**otox, the wonder drug of the 21st century, has surged in popularity since its 2002 FDA cosmetic approval. For those unfamiliar with Botox, it is a purified protein derived from botulinium toxin and used cosmetically to temporarily reduce fine lines and wrinkles of the face. Due to its reliable and predictable results, its popularity is unparalleled, over 3 million injections were performed last year, making it the most accepted medical cosmetic agent in the world. Since 1997, there has been an over 3000% percent increase in its use, but Botox is nothing new. The medical profession has recognized the benefits of Botox since the 1980's. For over 20 years, BOTOX has been used successfully and safely in cerebral palsy children to control muscle twitches, spasms and excess drooling. Ophthalmologists have used it for over a decade to treat strabismus (wondering eye). And Otolaryngologists have injected Botox into voice boxes (the larynx) of stutterers (spasmodic dysphonia). Recently, it has been FDA approved to treat those with migraine headaches and excess sweating. The medical profession continues to be amazed by all the new applications emerging for Botox. Each month there seems to be a new indication for Botox from bladder and colon spasms to treatment of foul genital odors and ringing in the ears. And the experimentation with Botox continues.

But Botox is most notable for its cosmetic use. It works by temporarily inhibiting the signal from the nerve to the muscle, relaxing the muscle and resulting in a reduction in facial wrinkles. The muscle returns to its normal state in about 10-12 weeks. Botox's popularity stems mostly from the impressive results, but it also due to the ease and quickness in which the treatment can be performed. Additionally, there is very little discomfort and no recovery time is necessary, allowing an immediate return to a busy schedule.

But isn't Botox a poison?

Really a shallow and short sighted argument when you consider that everyday modern miracles are performed with what, at one time, were considered poisons. From pancuronium (curare) to coumadin (warfarin) to digitalis (foxglove), all of these modern medicines were at one time or another used as poisons but today many people's lives depend on them.

Botox has been called a poison by many because of its derivation from botulinium toxin, perhaps the most potent toxin in the world and responsible for the potentially fatal disease botulism. At one time con-

Botox has been called a poison by many because of its derivation from botulinium toxin, perhaps the most potent toxins in the world and responsible for the potentially fatal disease botulism.



tracted from eating canned food prior to modern vacuum packing methods, botulism is not really a consideration today. It is important to not be fooled by the celebrated and peculiar case of 4 people in December of 2004 contracting Botulism in Florida from an attempt to create their own Botox. The treating practitioner with a suspended license was attempting to use his own version of black marketed Botox and did not succeed. This is analogous to taking household rubbing alcohol mixing it with orange juice and calling it a screwdriver. Allergan manufactured BOTOX is a very dilute amount of botulinum toxin. In fact, you would have to be treated with over 100 times the regular cosmetic dose in order to develop systemic toxicity. This would also be cost prohibitive to most considering the \$50,000 price tag. Allergan's Botox has an incredibly clean safety record and can be considered one of the safest pharmaceutical agents in all of medicine. In fact an argument can be made that it is safer than aspirin. If you were to look up the side effect profile of Aspirin in a physician drug resource book you would be surprised to see all the bad things that can potentially happen if you take aspirin. From breathing disorder, to heart arrhythmia and uncontrollable bleeding, aspirin doesn't appear so safe. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) if taken in excess or with alcohol can cause fatal liver damage. And ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) can be damaging to the lining of the stomach leading to ulcers. BOTOX, on the other hand when used by an experienced physician, has very limited side effects and just about all of them are reversible once the toxin's effects have worn off. The medical profession has experience treating all ages and conditions from children to the elderly in doses much greater than that which are use cosmetically. And with the popularity, safety profile and indications for Botox's use expanding at such a great rate, even if Botox is not for you cosmetically, don't be surprised if one day your doctor recommends it for a medical condition.

Steven H. Dayan, MD, FACS, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Illinois, 845 N. Michigan Avenue Suite 923, Chicago Illinois 60611, [www.drdayan.com](http://www.drdayan.com) □

WHO CREATES AN ADVERT.



**A** A "big picture" person.

**Tigerhill Studio**

Aerial and Architectural Photography  
6607 Weather Hill, Willowbrook, IL 60527  
708 246 3566  
[www.tigerhillstudio.com](http://www.tigerhillstudio.com)




**3M** *prestige window*



**3M** "Prestige" Window Films incorporate new "nano" technology allowing extremely that reduce 99% of the damaging UV rays while maintaining the natural look of your home.

**847.234.9655**

 **CLEARVIEW SOLUTIONS INCORPORATED**