

When It Comes To Botox, Consider the Source First



Lisa Hostetler, MD, PhD, performs a Botox injection on a patient. Dr. Hostetler is a board-certified dermatologist with the Springfield-based practice, Associates in Medical & Cosmetic Dermatology.

a reputable, U.S. based company (such as Allergan, who have placed a hologram on their bottles to represent its authentication.) "A reputable doctor will not be insulted by this request," she explains.

The practice of Associates in Medical and Cosmetic Dermatology has offices in Springfield and West Grove, and has been serving the Delaware County area for more than 10 years.

In addition to Dr. Hostetler, the principals of the practice include Robin B. Scheiner, M.D. and Kari W. Boucher, M.D., as well as medical aestheticians, Charlotte Gallagher, R.N., and Joanne Pinkerton, R.N.

Botox --the quick fix wrinkle reducer--has become highly popular with the aging baby boomer generation. Heavily marketed since the Federal Drug Administration first approved it in 2002, Botox has been found to meet the important criteria for mass consumer appeal - safe, effective and relatively affordable (compared with its surgical cousin).

But the rise in popularity has been met by a rise in availability as well, with everyone from podiatrists to beauty salons offering to administer it. And according to medical experts, that is when consumers need to beware.

Botox is made from deadly Botulinum toxin type A that can cause paralysis and in large doses, can be fatal. The cosmetic treatment, using highly diluted amounts of the toxin, consists of tiny injections into the facial muscles, diminishing their ability to contract and, thus, smoothing out the skin above. The effect isn't permanent: within about four months, the muscle returns to normal strength, requiring a new injection to sustain the effect.

Botox has no known serious side effects when used correctly, and is the only Food and Drug Administration-approved product of its kind.

Lisa Hostetler, M.D., Ph.D., a partner in the Springfield-based practice of Associates in Medical and Cosmetic Dermatology, emphasizes that the individual administering

Botox injections should be a specialist in the treatment of skin and should have a strong history of previous experience. "It's troubling to see Botox being administered at gyms, hotels, spas and hair salons without any medical supervision," said Dr. Hostetler. "People need to remember that Botox can be very safe and effective, but only in the hands of a skilled medical professional who understands the anatomy of the skin and muscles in the face."

The American Academy of Dermatology, American Society for Dermatologic Surgery and the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery have all issued statements warning the public about the increased risk of "improper technique, inappropriate dosages and unsanitary conditions" when dealing with untrained administrators. Board certified dermatologists or cosmetic surgeons are considered the best choices for Botox injections. Trained physician's assistants under the supervision of a dermatologist or cosmetic surgeon are also qualified to perform injections.

Patients also need to be aware that "bootleg" versions of Botox - often manufactured overseas without FDA oversight - have become widely distributed, particularly among the non-medical administrators.

Dr. Hostetler recommends that patients ask to see the actual bottle of Botulinum toxin to verify that it is from