

Botulinum toxin injection for tennis elbow

Purpose of the treatment

A local injection of botulinum toxin (Botox®) can be used to treat tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) when other, traditional forms of treatment have been tried. The purpose of botulinum toxin therapy is to temporarily weaken the painful, overworked muscle, which allows it to rest and relieves the pain.

How to prepare

No special preparations are needed. You must have a hand surgeon's referral for this treatment.

Treatment procedure

The botulinum toxin is usually injected into two muscles of the painful forearm. The drug's effect starts within a few days and is at its strongest for 2 to 4 weeks. The effect wears off gradually over a few months. Depending on how severe your symptoms are, you may need the treatment several times. This will be decided by the doctor who is treating you.

The injection feels like getting a vaccine. The injection needle may also be used to give off small, barely perceptible electrical pulses in the muscle. This is to verify that the correct target muscle has been found. A measuring device will be used to listen to the muscle's activity and to view it on a monitor.

After the treatment

The treatment is usually combined with sick leave. The hand surgeon determines how long it will be. Please contact the hand surgery unit or the doctor treating you if you have questions about sick leave. The certificate for sick leave will not be prepared by the clinical neurophysiology department.

The doctor who referred you to botulinum toxin therapy will provide instructions for further care after the injection (either a follow-up visit or a telephone appointment to discuss the drug's effect).

You may develop a bruise and a little pain at the injection site after the treatment. You may use your arm normally after the injection. **You will have to stay in the department's waiting room for half an hour after the treatment** so we can be sure you will not have an allergic reaction to the drug (this is extremely rare).