

## Let's Talk About...

# Botulinum toxin for torticollis

## What is botulinum toxin and how does it work?

Botulinum toxin is a medicine that loosens muscles so they are not too tight. Usually, the doctor gives botulinum toxin shots with a small needle into the muscle. Botulinum toxin starts to help about 1–2 weeks after the shot and lasts for about 3 months.

## What can botulinum toxin do for my child?

Botulinum toxin is used to treat the tight muscles in your child's neck. This helps your child in many ways. The tight muscles in your child's neck will become easier to stretch. Your child can move their neck more freely, and muscles on the weak side of their neck will get stronger.

Botulinum toxin effects are temporary. It works best if your child also has other treatments, such as stretching, special positioning, and a home exercise program to help strengthen the neck muscles. A tubular orthosis for torticollis (TOT collar™) may also be helpful.

## How will my child receive botulinum toxin?

Usually, the doctor injects botulinum toxin into the tight muscle. Many kids say they feel a sting or a pinch when they receive botulinum toxin, but these injections don't cause muscle aches. Young children who receive botulinum toxin are usually sedated, or given medicine that helps them sleep during the procedure. Sedation takes place in the Children's Procedure Center (CPC).

A CPC staff member will call you the afternoon before the procedure. They will tell you the foods and liquids your child can have before the botulinum toxin injections. After sedation, your child may feel drowsy for a while. The CPC staff will watch your child carefully until they are awake and ready to go home.



## Are there any risks or side effects from botulinum toxin?

Botulinum toxin is low risk. Even if a child receives botulinum toxin several times, the effects last about 3 months and are not permanent.

Side effects include:

- Bleeding or bruising where the shot was given
- Weakness in the muscle where the shot was given
- Rash in area where the shot was given
- Flu-like symptoms

Seek medical attention right away if your child has trouble swallowing, talking, or breathing. Call your child's healthcare provider if your child has other weak muscles away from the shot site.

