

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Botulinum Toxin: A Shot Of Hope For Smoothing Wrinkles

(NAPS)—A new dermatologic treatment can banish the wrinkles that make some people appear tired, angry or displeased. According to skin surgery experts, a quick shot is all it takes to help restore a youthful, smooth look.

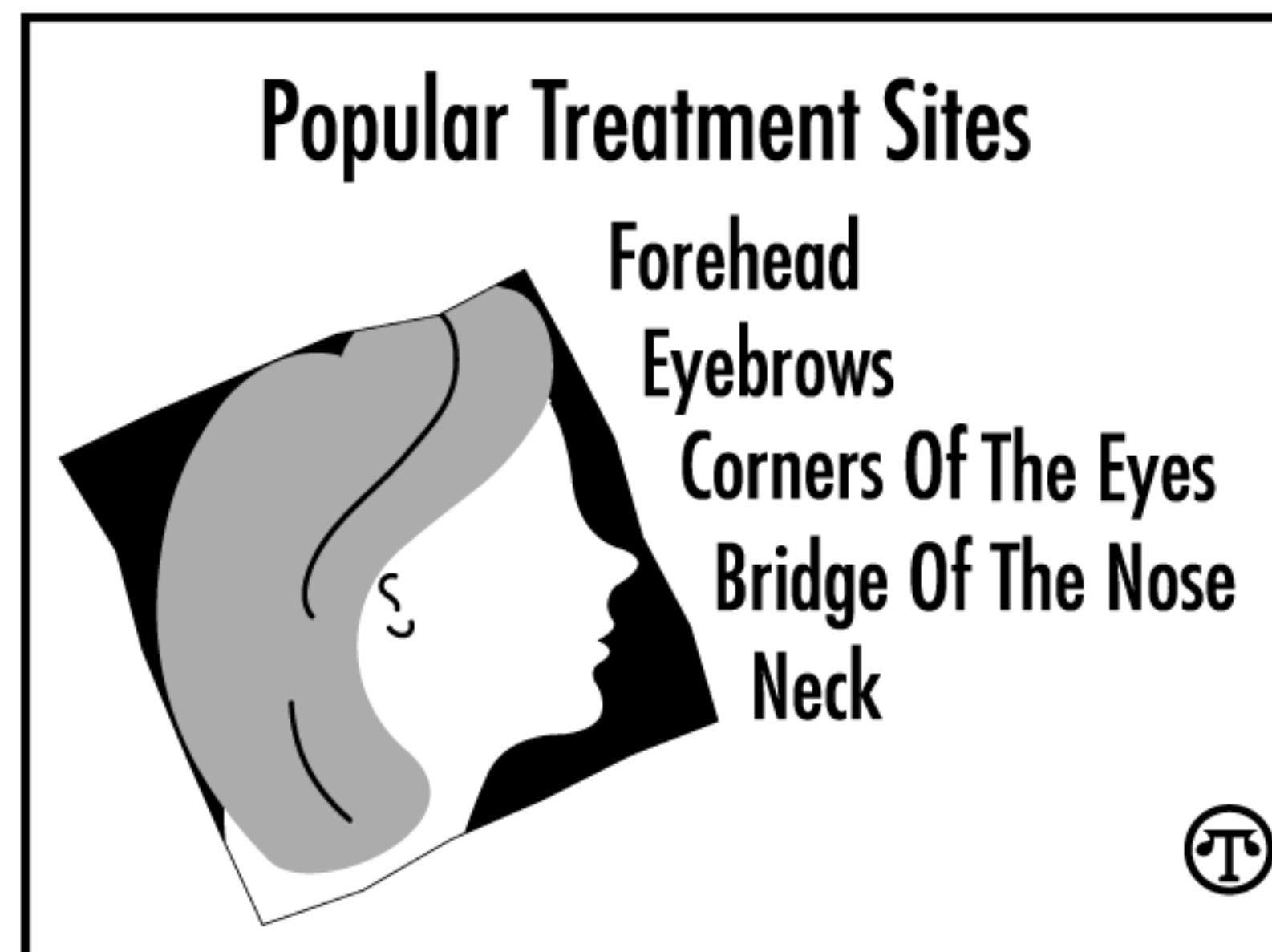
After years of involuntary frowning, squinting and knitting the brow, many adults are left with unattractive furrows that dominate the forehead, wrinkles that bridge the nose, and crows feet that frame the eyes. Even people in their 20s and 30s can show the telltale signs of an intense facial demeanor.

The good news is that dermatologic surgeons have the latest quick fix for these wrinkles: a simple injection of botulinum toxin.

Familiar for causing botulism food poisoning when taken orally in large amounts, botulinum toxin blocks the nerve signals from the brain to the muscle. However, a purified form of the toxin has been used safely for nearly 20 years to treat muscle disorders such as lazy eye, eye ticks and uncontrolled blinking. Now dermatologic surgeons find that botulinum toxin can be a cosmetic face-saver without surgery, without scars and with almost no “downtime.”

It is also used to relieve excessive sweating and even prevent migraine headaches.

Dermatologic surgeons inject very tiny amounts of botulinum



A quick fix for wrinkles can take less than 30 minutes.

toxin into a specific facial muscle, causing a local relaxation and weakness of that muscle. Once the muscle is weakened, it cannot contract. Since there is no way to make the undesirable facial expression, the lines gradually smooth out from disuse and new creases are prevented from forming. In this way, botulinum toxin acts as a muscle blockade to immobilize the underlying cause of the unwanted lines and prevent “wrinkly” expressions.

This in-office procedure is generally well tolerated and typically takes less than 30 minutes.

The wrinkle-smoothing results become apparent in three to seven days. Improvement usually lasts about three to four months before the effect gradually fades and muscle action returns.

Skin surgery experts find that follow-up treatments often have longer-lasting results because the facial muscles begin to atrophy

(thin), and the patient “unlearns” certain facial habits.

Popular treatment sites for botulinum toxin therapy are:

- Vertical lines between the eyebrows and on the bridge of the nose
- Squint lines or crows feet at the corners of the eyes
- The forehead horizontal lines
- The muscle bands often visible on the neck, commonly known as “turkey neck”

Side effects are uncommon but may include soreness or bruising around the injection site. In rare instances, patients may develop temporary drooping of the brow or eyelid.

Botulinum toxin therapy can also be used to reposition eyebrows and to alleviate excessive perspiration on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, forehead and underarms. Additionally, it may prolong the wrinkle-reducing results of a laser resurfacing procedure. Most recently, dermatologic surgeons have discovered that their patients who suffer migraines enjoy months of headache relief when botulinum toxin is injected into the forehead area and the back of the neck.

For more information and to find a Board-certified dermatologic surgeon in your area, contact the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery at **1-800-441-2737** or visit the Web site at **www.asds.net.org**.