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**Botox for Beginners**

Everyone knows that Botox can be used to treat fine lines and wrinkles, helping those of us who want to look a little bit more youthful, avoid surgery. But there are lots of things that you need to think about when considering having Botox. For example, did you know that it can take a little bit of time to take effect? Or that an aftercare plan is extremely important? Here we aim to tell you everything we know about Botox, so that you are 100% prepared for your Botox treatment.

Firstly, **do your research**. Check the qualifications of your practitioner and ascertain what training they have had. Can you see their work by viewing before and after pictures of their client’s treatments, and hearing from happy customers? Are they registered Healthcare Professionals? Are they insured? These are all questions you should be asking. If your practitioner doesn’t meet the criteria, then think twice about undergoing a treatment with them.

“I can’t have Botox – **I can’t stand needles!!**” We hear this a lot, and we’re here to tell you that there is no need to be scared. The needles used are so small, they are designed for minimal discomfort. Plus, the procedure should be taken at your pace, in a relaxed environment, so you’ll barely know it’s happening! Bruising is possible, but very rare, and you can continue as normal after a procedure – no downtime or recovery needed.

**Know the cost.** Botox is a fantastic product that can do fantastic things, so be prepared to pay for it. Prices can vary, but you should expect to pay around £150 for one area, and up to £400 for three or more areas. If prices are much cheaper than this then you need to query the product, the practitioner and their expertise.

**Give it time.** Most people expect to see instant results with Botox, but the nature of the treatment is that it takes about two weeks to take full effect. If you then decide on a top-up at your two-week check-up, then the results of your top-up will take another two weeks to reach full effect. Therefore, if you have a specific date or event that you are aiming to look good for, book your Botox treatment a month before.

**Preparation is important.** Take a bit of time to prepare for your procedure, as rushing into it should be avoided for a number of reasons. Your practitioner should have a consultation with you about what results you want to achieve, and you may decide to go away and have a think about it, or you may be more than happy with your consultation and go straight into having the procedure. Either way, you should avoid alcohol, vitamin E, retinol and Ibuprofen the day before your procedure to reduce the risk of bruising, and you will need to make your practitioner aware of any medication you are taking. Botox is a ‘prescription only medication’ so your medical history is very important and should be discussed with your practitioner before any treatment starts.

**Less is more!** You may be tempted to go all out and attack all of your troublesome areas in one go, but really your practitioner should advice you to try a little bit at a time in one or two areas. Results can take a bit of time to reach their full potential, so if you like the end result, you can discuss other areas that you would like to treat at your follow-up appointment.

**Aftercare is key.** Although you can get straight back to normal life after a Botox procedure, your practitioner should give you some good post-procedure advice so that you are aware of the do’s and don’ts in order to give yourself the opportunity to get the best possible results. You will also be scheduled in for a check-up two weeks after your treatment to review the effects, check for any asymmetries and correct accordingly, and add a top up if wanted or needed.

The main thing we want you to think about is your **safety**. Although a safe product in the right hands, there are potential complications and side effects if Botox is not administered properly. So, before you sign up for Botox, just remember, do your due diligence on your practitioner to make sure they are trained, insured and have lots of happy customers. Make sure they listen to you and understand what you want to achieve, and equally advise you if the results you want are not achievable or right for you!

Botox, if considered, researched and administered correctly and safely, can achieve fantastic results as part of your anti-aging regime.