



## Should Dentists Inject Botox?

DENTISTS ARE TRUSTED TO GIVE PATIENTS A SHOT OF LOCAL ANESTHETIC before a cavity filling or a root canal. But should they be allowed to administer Botox injections?

Botox has become the most popular minimally invasive cosmetic procedure in the country, numbering 2.6 million in the United States in 2011, according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. The American Dental Association says that at least 20 state dental boards, including Maryland's, have approved the administration of Botox for cosmetic use or a specific dental operation.

Art & Dentistry in Bethesda, for example, offers it for patients who suffer from migraines or TMJ disorders, while Dr. William Lanza of the Dental Institute, also in Bethesda, gives injections for facial cosmetic purposes, such as getting rid of frown lines or crow's-feet. Prices vary, but treatments typically range from \$400 to \$700.

The industry seems split on the practice. In our survey of area dentists, 45 percent said dentists who are properly trained should be allowed to do Botox injections, while 25 percent were against it and the rest checked "maybe" when asked if it should be allowed.

General dentist Bernard L. Greenbaum says he doesn't have plans to offer Botox in his Bethesda office, even though he took a training course: "I let my good friend give me an injection in the class, and it looked great. But I still don't feel comfortable doing it."

Those in favor argued that dentists have the skills and knowledge. "In dental school, we take courses in head and neck anatomy and are taught how to administer anesthesia," says Lanza, who took a Botox course with the American Academy of Facial Esthetics. "If the dentist has had the proper training to become comfortable with administering Botox and dermafillers, then why not?"

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