

McGinley Vascular Pressure Treatment

Botox is injected into the problem spot of a muscle compressing blood flow, effectively freezing it for three to four months.

By [BRAD STULBERG](#)



JAMIE CHUNG

What Is It? The same neurotoxin that has been popularized by the cosmetic surgery industry -Botox- is injected under ultrasound and CT guidance into the problem spot of a muscle compressing bloodflow, effectively freezing it for three to four months. “The goal of this patented procedure is to isolate the part of the muscle that is causing an issue and use botulinum toxin to turn it off,” says sports-medicine physician McGinley.

What does it treat? Botulinum injections are used to treat two lower-leg injuries: chronic exertional compartment syndrome (CECS) and functional popliteal artery entrapment syndrome (fPAES). In afflicted athletes, a small part of the calf muscle compresses veins or arteries, which can cause a buildup of pressure in the lower leg (CECS) or a lack of bloodflow to the lower leg (fPAES). The result is intense pain, swelling, and numbness in the calf, ankle, and foot. Runners with CECS or fPAES once

required surgery. Now, another option is to inject botulinum toxin into the area of muscle that is impinging bloodflow. “The invasiveness and risks are minimal, especially when compared with surgery,” says McGinley, who is a pioneer of this treatment. Although runners lose some muscle function in the “frozen” area, it is generally a small loss, and, over time, the body compensates.

How effective? Using botulinum toxin in this manner is novel; only one study has been published. But that research, published in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, found it eliminated pain in 94 percent of CECS subjects. Although 69 percent of subjects experienced some loss of strength, the authors reported that this had “no functional consequence.”

Who’s had it? In 2011, Laura Stamp, a recent graduate of Williams College in Massachusetts, could hardly run. She was treated for CECS with Botox—the first patient to receive this treatment—and went on to have a successful collegiate career in cross-country skiing and running.

Does it hurt? The injection hurts no more than a flu shot, says McGinley.

Who offers it? Though he hopes to train other doctors, as of press time, McGinley is the only provider of botulinum toxin therapy. Therefore, runners seeking the treatment must travel to Casper, Wyoming, where McGinley treats athletes from all over the world.

What’s the cost? Depending on the amount of botulinum toxin needed, the entire treatment may cost \$5,000 to \$8,000. Insurance covers the treatment only about 15 percent of the time, but McGinley says, “that number is rising as insurance companies realize this can prevent otherwise costly surgery.”

Treatment plan? Most athletes need a second treatment six to seven months after the first. (This costs about \$3,000.) Then, the portion of muscle that’s impinging bloodflow should atrophy, McGinley says, becoming so small that it no longer causes a problem.

A Part of Hearst Digital Media

Runner's World participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on editorially chosen products purchased through our links to retailer sites.

©2019 Hearst Magazine Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Notice](#)

[Your California Privacy Rights](#)

[Interest-Based Ads](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Site Map](#)