



## WRITING SAMPLE

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### The Latest Extreme Frizz Fighter is Called "Blotox"

By Gretchen Heber

We mentioned blotox a few years ago in a news brief, but thought we'd revisit it to see if it was still a "thing."

It's called "blotox" and it involves getting Botox injections in your scalp to stop it from sweating during exercise.

Scalp sweat, as we all know, is the enemy of the perfect coif. Unsurprisingly, this trend started with women who wear their hair straight and don't want their blowouts ruined.

Other women do blotox to simply keep their scalps cleaner.

But perhaps this technique would work well for curlies who are looking to avoid head-sweat-induced frizz, too. Let's learn more.

#### What is Botox?

According to Medline Plus, a publication of the National Institutes of Health, "Botox is a drug made from a toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. It's the same toxin that causes a life-threatening type of food poisoning called botulism."

There are a number of products that contain botulinum toxin, including Botox, Dysport, and Xeomin. These products are used by the medical community to smooth wrinkles and to treat a number of medical issues including crossed eyes, uncontrolled blinking, muscle stiffness or spasms, and migraine headaches.

Products containing botulinum toxin are also very effective for the treatment of excessive sweating, says Dr. Jennifer Vickers, a dermatologist with Sanova Dermatology in Austin,

Texas. Botulinum toxin "works by blocking the release of acetylcholine, thereby deactivating the eccrine sweat glands," she says.

"These treatments are most commonly used for sweating in the underarms, hands, and feet but have been increasingly used for scalp sweating in the last few years," says Dr. Vickers, who has participated in research involving the use of technology to aid in skin cancer diagnosis and has published articles in peer-reviewed journals, such as the New England Journal of Medicine and the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology.

The official name for using Botox and Botox-type products to curb sweating is called "hyperhidrosis treatment."

### **Why Botox?**

Dr. Vickers says people seek these treatments for different reasons. "Some patients want their blow out to last longer or to avoid frizziness," she says. "Some patients wish to reduce sweating when working out, and postmenopausal women may wish to avoid sweating during hot flashes."

And it's not just women who get the treatments, she adds. "I have had male patients request treatment for these same reasons or for treatment of conditions that are made worse by sweating, such as folliculitis," she says.

Folliculitis is infection of the hair follicles. It is caused by bacteria in the follicle and presents as redness and swelling. It can be itchy, painful, and unsightly. Severe infections can cause scarring and permanent hair loss, according to the Mayo Clinic.

### **How It's Done**

To perform the scalp hyperhidrosis treatment, physicians make anywhere from 100 to 200 injections on the scalp. "Some patients may only need injections around their hairline and others may need injections over the whole scalp," says Dr. Vickers.

While this may sound painful, she says, "A very tiny needle is used, and the entire treatment takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes. It is generally well tolerated."

Treatments last anywhere between 6 to 12 months, according to Dr. Vickers.

"The cost starts around \$1000 per treatment, but can vary from patient to patient and may only be required once or twice a year," she says.

The price may vary depending on where you live.

## **Before you Leap**

Dr. Vickers says that while the FDA has approved Botulinum toxin for axillary (underarm) hyperhidrosis, it has not approved treatments for the scalp. "However, treatments are generally safe," she says, "especially if performed by a board-certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon."

Botox has been used safely and effectively in this off-label capacity for many years. If scalp hyperhidrosis treatment is something you're considering, you might want to consult your own physician. Botox, like any medical procedure, has risks that you'll want to fully explore with a qualified and experienced physician.