



# Urology Consultants, Ltd.

Center for Continence Care and Pelvic Medicine

## **BOTOX FOR OVERACTIVE BLADDER**

### **What is it?**

Botox® was approved by the FDA in the 1980's to treat certain disorders of the eye muscles and is now used widely in cosmetic procedures to treat wrinkles. It has been used in Urology since the late 1990's to treat disorders of the bladder or urethra. It acts by blocking the release of specialized chemicals from nerves; known as neurotransmitters, which cause muscles to contract. The effect is to temporarily paralyze or weaken the muscles that it is injected into.

### **How is it done?**

Botox® is injected into your bladder muscle using a specialized instrument called a cystoscope that allows us to look at the inner lining of the bladder. The procedure takes about 5 minutes or less and can be done in the office under local anesthesia.

### **What are the benefits?**

Botox® can be used to treat incontinence or urgency/frequency caused by involuntary contractions of the bladder muscle. The benefits usually last for 6 months, and then the procedure may need to be repeated twice a year if successful. Studies have shown that 2/3 of patients benefit from this approach.

### **What are the risks?**

The risks of cystoscopy include a small risk of bleeding and infection, which are generally mild and treatable. The amount of Botox® needed to treat each individual varies. If too little is injected, the symptoms may only be partially treated, and a larger dose can be used at the next injection. If too much is injected, the bladder may not empty completely requiring you to use a catheter to empty your bladder. This may occur in 5-15% of patients depending on the dose given.

### **What are the alternatives?**

Fluid limitation, pelvic floor muscle therapy (Kegel exercises) and medications are used to treat urgency/frequency and urge incontinence. These options will usually have been tried without sufficient benefit before Botox® is considered. Neuromodulation of the sacral nerves (InterStim®) is another option for urgency/frequency and urge incontinence. Botox® is usually a more attractive alternative than permanent catheters, major bladder surgery, or just living with the problem when other options don't help.

### **Is it covered by my insurance?**

Since Botox® is FDA approved for bladder disorders most insurances cover the costs of the procedure. Medicare currently **is covering** the use of Botox® for urologic reasons