

Botox in the Masseter

Cosmetic and medical benefits of high-dose injection into the masseter muscle.

BY LILY TALAKOUB, MD

A 42-year-old female patient presented to our office seeking cosmetic treatment because she wasn't happy with the appearance of her face. Upon examination, I noted that her face was very squared in the lower jaw, which can lead to a more masculine appearance and fuller face. Physical examination revealed that she had a very thick masseter muscle.

The patient confirmed a history of teeth grinding and waking up with daily migraine headaches. She reported that she had sought medical treatment from several doctors and dentists for the headaches and grinding and had gone through three different mouth guards and took a prescription medication for migraines, but nothing helped. The masseter muscle tends to be thick in patients who grind their teeth or clench tightly at night either because of nervousness or out of habit. With prolonged grinding and clenching, that muscle gets thicker and thicker over the years, which leads to a wider jaw.

I suggested treatment with injection of onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox) in her masseter muscle to relax the muscle so she would not be able to clench, grind, or bite down as hard. This relaxation in the muscle would lead to thinning of the muscle, which would result in thinning her face and alleviating her teeth grinding and headaches.

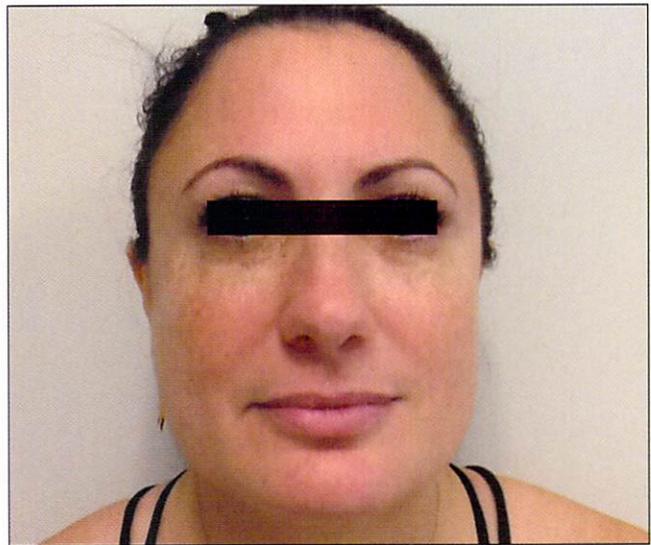
The patient agreed to the treatment. I injected 100 units of Botox (See Figures 1a and 1b).

The patient returned for follow up one month later saying, "This has changed my life. I don't take any of my migraine medicines any more, I don't need my mouth guard any more, my face is thinner."

TREATMENT TIPS

Botox injection into the masseter muscle is ideal for patients who are grinding, clenching, and wearing out their teeth and need a lot of dental work, for patients who have frequent tension or migraine headaches, and for patients who do not like the shape of their face because of square or thick jaw line and who want to appear more feminine.

The amount of Botox needed to treat this area ranges between 60 and 100 units of Botox, depending on the thickness of the muscle. Patients can expect headaches and clenching to go away within a week and will see the full



Figures 1a-b. Patient before (top) and one month after (bottom) injection of 100 units of Botox into the masseter.

effects of jaw thinning about one month after treatment, when the muscle has had time to atrophy.

In 10 years of performing this treatment, I've never had one side effect other than some bruising, which is a potential side effect whenever you inject into the face. There's no swelling, no downtime. It is the most magical treatment

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