

Crow's feet are the creases that radiate from the outer corners of the eyes when we smile or squint. They come from years of expression, sun exposure, and gradual collagen loss. For many of my patients, they are the first lines that bother them in photos. Botox cosmetic injections are a reliable way to soften those lines while keeping your smile looking like you. The key is understanding how the treatment works around the eyes, how many units of Botox are typically used, how long results last, and how to choose a skilled injector who respects facial movement.

I have treated thousands of eyes over the years. When Botox for crow's feet goes well, friends often comment that someone looks rested rather than "done." When it goes poorly, you can spot a frozen or flat smile from across the room. Technique, dosing, and anatomy matter. Here is how to approach it like a pro.

What Botox does for crow's feet

Botox, a brand of botulinum toxin type A, temporarily weakens targeted muscles. Around the eyes, it works on the lateral orbicularis oculi, the circular muscle that squeezes the eyelids during smiling, laughing, or squinting. By dialing down the pull of that muscle, the skin creases less and the etched lines soften. This does not fill the skin the way dermal fillers do. Instead, it reduces the motion that creases it, allowing the skin to appear smoother and, over time, often improving texture as the skin isn't constantly folded.

At rest, many people have fine, etched lines that persist even when they are not smiling. Those "static" lines can improve with repeated Botox treatments, good sun protection, and skin care that supports collagen, but they do not disappear overnight. Dynamic lines, which appear only with expression, [botox near me](#) respond quickly and usually almost completely.

Who makes a good candidate

If your lines appear mainly when you smile or squint, Botox for crow's feet tends to work beautifully. If your lines are deep at rest, Botox still helps, though you may need complementary strategies such as a fractional laser, microneedling with radiofrequency, or topical retinoids to address texture. Patients with hooded eyes or eyelid laxity can also benefit, but dosing needs finesse to avoid changing eyelid position or altering the smile.

Certain situations call for caution. A history of eyelid surgery, chronic dry eye symptoms, facial nerve issues, or a tendency for asymmetric smiles should be discussed during your Botox consultation. So should medications or supplements that increase bleeding risk, since the eye area bruises easily. Pregnancy and breastfeeding remain off label or not recommended for Botox. If you have a major event, plan ahead. For first time Botox, I advise scheduling a trial session several months before photos or weddings so that you have time for adjustments.

How many units of Botox are used for crow's feet

Dosing varies by muscle strength, eye shape, gender, and the effect you want. A common range for crow's feet is 6 to 12 units per side, often placed in 3 to 5 small injection points that fan out from the lateral canthus, which is the outer corner of the eye. In my practice, light dosing for delicate lines often starts around 7 to 8 units per side, while stronger smiles may need 10 to 12 units per side for full softening. Men often require a bit more due to denser muscle mass, though not always.

People who prefer a "baby Botox" or micro Botox approach can stay at the lower end of the range, preserving more movement at the expense of some residual lines. Patients who want the cleanest possible canvas for high resolution photography may lean toward the higher end, though I still avoid fully freezing the area. One important point: the closer injections get to the lower eyelid, the higher the risk of under eye changes or smile alteration. Careful placement and conservative dosing prevent that.

Alternatives within the same toxin family include Dysport and Xeomin. Dysport tends to diffuse a bit more, which some injectors like for the lateral eye area. Xeomin is a "naked" toxin that lacks accessory proteins. In skilled hands, all three can create excellent results. Unit conversions differ, so focus on effect, not just the number of units. Your injector should know how to translate Botox dosage to Dysport or Xeomin if you prefer a specific product.

Where the injections go

The placement strategy is fairly consistent in principle but should be individualized. Most injectors place a small series of blebs of toxin in a sweeping curve that parallels the crow's feet. I target the upper third of the lateral orbicularis to

preserve the delicate support that prevents the lower eyelid from looking heavy. If a patient complains of “bunny lines” on the sides of the nose or lines under the eyes, those are different patterns that may require separate micro dosing or, in some cases, a different plan entirely.

Leaving a safety buffer from the lateral orbital rim and avoiding injections too close to the zygomaticus muscles, which lift the corner of the mouth, reduces unintended changes to a smile. The old joke among injectors [Look at more info](#) is that five millimeters in the wrong direction can rewrite a face. This is where experience matters.

The appointment, step by step

Check in, photos, consent, and a brief review of medical history usually take more time than the injections themselves. Makeup comes off around the eye area, the skin is cleaned with alcohol or chlorhexidine, and, if needed, a tiny amount of topical anesthetic is applied. Most patients skip numbing since the injections are quick and feel like small pinches. Using a very fine needle and gentle technique minimizes discomfort.

I have patients smile, then relax, to map their specific pattern. The whole Botox procedure for crow’s feet often takes 5 to 10 minutes. Ice can be applied for a minute or two after to decrease swelling and reduce the chance of bruising. You can drive yourself home, return to work, and go about your day with a few simple precautions.

Aftercare that actually helps

For the first four hours, stay upright. Skip facials, heavy exercise, or anything that involves pressure around the eyes for the rest of the day. You can gently cleanse and moisturize as usual at night. I advise avoiding blood thinners such as high dose fish oil, aspirin, or ibuprofen around the injection day if your physician says that is safe for you, since they can increase bruising. If a pinpoint bruise appears, a dab of concealer usually handles it. Arnica gel and cold compresses can help it fade faster.

Results start to show within 2 to 4 days and continue to improve for 10 to 14 days. If you have a planned touch up, schedule it for two weeks after treatment. Earlier than that can lead to overcorrection because the full effect has not declared itself.

Longevity: how long does Botox last around the eyes

For crow’s feet, results usually last 3 to 4 months. Some patients metabolize toxin more quickly and see softening for closer to 10 or 12 weeks, while others stretch to 5 months. First time Botox sometimes wears off a little faster. After a few cycles, many patients find their baseline lines are softer, likely because the skin is not being folded as much between visits.

Activity level, sun exposure, and facial habits matter. If you are a runner out in bright sun without sunglasses, you will squint more and may see earlier return of movement. Good sunglasses with UV protection and a hat make a visible difference over the years. Skin care supports longevity as well. A nightly retinoid, daily broad spectrum SPF 30 to 50, and a well formulated eye cream strengthen the surface so it holds results well.



A wanted poster from FGE (Fuerza Gendarma Ecuatoriana). It features a photo of a man with a beard and mustache. The text includes: "Descripción", "Edad: 40 años aprox.", "Estatura: 1.73 m", "Sexo: Hombre", "Cabello: Corto, color oscuro", "Ojos: Medianos", "Complejión: Media", "Tez: Morena", "Observaciones: Cara redonda, frente amplia, con semiarqueadas, nariz mediana, boca mediana de labios oval, con barba y bigote.", "Probable responsable del delito SECUESTRO AGRAVADO", "RECOMPENSA \$100,000", and "¡Cien mil pesos O".

Frequency and maintenance timing

Most people repeat treatment every 3 to 4 months for consistent results. Some prefer to let it fully wear off before booking another Botox appointment, while others like a standing schedule. After several cycles, spreading to every 4 or even 5 months can be sensible if you like a gentle return of motion. A light maintenance touch up between full sessions is reasonable when you are close to a big event and want a polish rather than a full reset.

Natural looking results vs. overdone: how to get the balance right

You should still look like yourself. The goal for crow's feet is to keep your smile warm while smoothing the lines that distract on camera. Over-relaxing the muscle can flatten expression, and that reads as odd. I ask new patients to bring a photo from a time they loved how they looked. It helps map target movement, not just surface lines.

Placement also needs to accommodate asymmetries. Almost everyone has a smile that is stronger on one side. Matching dose to muscle strength avoids one side relaxing more than the other. If you notice minor asymmetry after your first treatment, a one or two unit adjustment typically fixes it. This is why follow up photos and open communication matter.

Safety profile and side effects to consider

Botox has an excellent safety record in cosmetic use when delivered by qualified professionals. The most common side effects after crow's feet treatment are transient redness, mild swelling, or tiny bruises at the injection sites. Headaches can occur in a small percentage of patients and generally resolve within a day or two. On rare occasions, patients describe a heavy feeling around the eye or a change in their smile that lasts until the toxin wears off.

Serious complications are rare but real. Unintended diffusion into neighboring muscles can create eyelid heaviness or alter cheek animation. Excessively low or medial placement can increase that risk. If you experience visual changes, severe pain, or signs of infection, contact your injector promptly. Robust anatomy knowledge and conservative dosing near the lids are your best protection. If you are asking, "is Botox safe," the answer is yes in experienced hands, with proper screening and technique.

Cost, pricing, and how to think about value

Botox price varies with geography, injector expertise, and whether you pay per unit or per area. In major cities, the average cost of Botox per unit often ranges from 12 to 20 dollars. Crow's feet typically require about 12 to 24 units total, so the Botox treatment cost for this area often falls between 200 and 450 dollars, sometimes more with premium practices. Clinics may offer Botox packages or memberships that reduce per unit pricing if you commit to regular maintenance. You will also see Botox deals or "Botox specials near me" online, including Groupon offers. Be careful. Cheap Botox is not a bargain if the product is diluted, counterfeit, or injected poorly. Verify that you are receiving Botox Cosmetic from Allergan Aesthetics in an unopened vial and that your injector is licensed to perform the treatment.

Per area pricing can look simpler, but it hides unit count. I prefer transparent, per unit pricing so you know exactly what you are getting. Experienced injectors use the least amount of product needed to produce a natural result. That saves money over time and lowers complication risk. If you are price shopping, ask how many units of Botox the quoted price includes and who is performing the injections.

Botox vs Dysport vs Xeomin around the eyes

All three are botulinum toxin type A products with similar efficacy. Differences show up in onset, spread, and personal response. Dysport can have a slightly faster onset for some patients, sometimes softening crow's feet in 2 to 3 days. It may diffuse a bit more, which can be useful for a smooth fan of lines but requires respect for boundaries. Xeomin lacks accessory proteins and is a nice option for people who have used Botox for years and feel it is not lasting quite as long as it used to, though robust head to head data on longevity differences are mixed. Cost per unit can differ, but per treatment cost tends to be comparable when you account for unit conversions. The best product is the one your injector uses expertly and that your face likes.

When fillers, lasers, or skin care should join the plan

Botox is the cornerstone for dynamic crow's feet. For etched-in static lines, midface volume loss, or crepey skin, combination therapy creates the best outcome.

Hyaluronic acid fillers near the lateral eye require extreme caution and are used sparingly, if at all, directly in crow's feet due to risk of lumpiness and swelling. Filling the cheek or temple to restore support can indirectly soften the area by improving the frame of the eye. Energy-based treatments such as fractional laser or radiofrequency microneedling tighten and smooth the surface. A series of sessions can generate collagen that works with Botox to reduce lines even at rest.

Daily skin care matters. A retinoid at night, vitamin C in the morning, and diligent sunscreen provide the foundation. If you are sensitive around the eyes, start with a low strength retinol a couple of nights per week and build up. This is slow medicine, but it pays dividends when combined with periodic Botox injections.

Preventative Botox and age considerations

There is no perfect age for Botox. The right time is when dynamic lines bother you and are starting to etch. For some, that is late twenties, especially if they have a high expressive baseline, lighter skin, and a lot of sun exposure. For others, it is mid to late thirties. Preventative Botox does not mean heavy dosing. It means gentle, well placed micro doses that teach muscles to relax just enough to prevent deepening lines. The goal is to avoid ever needing aggressive correction later.

Men sometimes come in later and ask for subtle softening rather than a polished look. That is entirely workable. "Brotox" is simply Botox tailored to masculine features: maintain stronger lateral movement, avoid arching the brow, and match dose to thicker muscles. Photos help here too.

What a first time patient can expect

If you are booking your first Botox appointment for crow's feet, bring a clear idea of what you want to preserve as well as what you want to change. Tell your injector if you act on stage, lead sales demos, or rely on expressive communication as part of your work. I note careers like teaching or hospitality that lean on warm smiles, then plan doses accordingly. Expect a light, conservative first session and a two week follow up. Most new patients say they still feel like themselves, just fresher, which is the point.



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How to choose the right injector

Credentials and artistry both count. Seek a board certified dermatologist, facial plastic surgeon, plastic surgeon, oculoplastic surgeon, or an experienced nurse practitioner or physician assistant working under one. Ask how often they treat crow's feet, how they handle asymmetry, and what their retreatment policy is if you need a minor tweak. Look at Botox before and after photos, ideally taken at two weeks with smiles, not only at rest. Avoid a clinic that will not tell you what product they use or how many units they are injecting.

If you are searching "Botox near me," narrow the list to clinics that specialize in facial aesthetics, read Botox reviews with a critical eye, and schedule a Botox consultation. Trust your impression during that visit. If you feel rushed,

pressured into more areas than you wanted, or promised risk free perfection, keep shopping. The best Botox is not a transaction. It is a relationship over time.

Common pitfalls and how to avoid them

Treating too close to the lower lid can create a subtle bulge under the eye or worsen crepiness. Under dosing can leave little visible change, which is frustrating if you have made the trip and paid the fee. Over dosing can flatten your smile. Poor placement can create step-off lines where part of the muscle is relaxed and another segment is not, resulting in a choppy look. Fortunately, most of these are avoidable with thoughtful mapping and modest, strategic dosing.

One more practical tip: do not stack your crow's feet treatment on the same day as an intensive facial massage, a hot yoga class, or a long flight. Give the product a quiet day to bind the receptors in the target muscle.

Medical uses and special cases near the eyes

Therapeutic botulinum toxin is used in ophthalmology for blepharospasm and in neurology for migraine prevention. If you receive medical Botox for chronic migraine, coordinate your cosmetic injections with your neurologist. The dosing and patterns differ. You can usually have both, but spacing and total units should be planned to avoid stacking too much in one region.

Budgeting and planning over a year

A typical maintenance plan for crow's feet includes 3 to 4 treatments per year. If your per session cost is around 300 to 450 dollars, the annual spend will often fall between 900 and 1,800 dollars. Build this into your skin health budget the way you would budget for dental care or hair appointments. Some patients add a yearly laser series to address texture or pigment, which may range widely in cost. If cash flow matters, ask your Botox clinic about memberships that spread payments or include small touch ups.

What not to do: at-home Botox and counterfeit product

Never attempt Botox at home. This is a prescription medication that can cause harm if misplaced. Online "Botox alternatives" that promise similar results without injections either do not work or rely on irritants that create temporary swelling. There are natural Botox alternatives for general skin health, like peptides and retinoids, but they do not relax muscles. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. Prioritize safety and the long view. The eye area is not a training ground.

When a small tweak creates a big improvement

One of my favorite examples is a photographer in her late thirties who loved laughing but hated how it read in headshots. Her smile was wide and strong, and her crow's feet wrapped almost to the hairline. We used 9 units per side and left a bit of movement intentionally. At two weeks, we added a 1 unit feather touch along the top line where a single crease still caught light. Her results looked natural on video and in stills. She felt like herself, but the lines no longer stole focus. That is success.

The path to smooth crow's feet, summarized

- Expect 6 to 12 units per side, tailored to your smile strength and goals, with results lasting roughly 3 to 4 months.
- Choose a qualified injector who respects your natural expression and maps injections to your unique pattern.
- Maintain with sun protection, good skin care, and realistic scheduling. Use complementary treatments for etched lines if needed.

With a calibrated approach, Botox around the eyes softens lines without sanding off your personality. Book Botox when you are ready, ask precise questions during your Botox consultation, and favor skill over discounts. Whether you are a first time Botox patient or optimizing your routine, the right technique delivers refreshed, convincing results that hold up in real life and on camera.