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PALTROW

BEST BEAUTY

The Botox

Despite recent reports of Botox injections paralyzing the wrinkle in popularity. Fan syringes for its at expression lines, a love to snipe about hasn't. According to for Aesthetic Plus Botox procedures \$1.2 billion last year, now approved for countries. Clearly, few people seem concerned that this toxin can be deadly if it is used improperly.

The devil-may-care attitude may prevail in part because users are rarely confronted with the list of possible side effects. Perusing Botox's prescribing information, which states that there have been "rare spontaneous reports of death...after treatment with botulinum toxin," isn't part of the usual treatment visit. "An allergic reaction to Botox could cause the body to go into anaphylactic shock, which can result in death," says Ben Kaminsky, a pharmaceutical chemist, co-founder of B. Kamins Chemist, and co-author of *Beyond Botox*. Meanwhile, those who have an allergy to the albumin in eggs probably shouldn't receive Botox, since the toxin is mixed with amounts of human albumin. Who knew? It's worth stating that the cases recently reported in the news did not involve Botox Cosmetic, which is manufactured by Allergan. The Florida cases resulting in paralysis involved raw botulinum toxin made for research purposes in extremely high concentrations. Provided it's in the right dose and in the right hands, Allergan's Botox appears to be safe in the short term. But what about the long term?

A 1999 statement from the National Institutes of Health asserted that "the long-term effects [greater than five years] of chronic treatment with botulinum toxin remain unknown." Since then, an Allergan-supported meta-analysis published in 2004 indicates that Botox has had "a favorable safety and tolerability profile" for a range of uses over a 15-year period. Certainly, no legitimate doctor

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antibodies and a resistance to Botox if it's injected too frequently (more than every three months), according to Matarasso.

Too much Botox can lead to some unflattering beauty effects as it can either flatten out an

temporarily paralyzes or weakens muscles to keep them from contracting. But what does that mean for women who start getting injections in their 20s and 30s? "In

Botox: number-one cosmetic pro in the United States and yet the ho-stu confirm safety for cosmetic use for more than nine years

upward in an unnatural horseshoe-like arc," says Beverly Hills makeup artist Valerie Sarnelle. If Botox is placed incorrectly around the eyes or spreads to nearby muscles, things get more unsavory. Upper eyelids may droop and lower lids can pull away from the eyeball. It's also not uncommon for Botox to cause drooping and drooling when injected near the mouth, says Kaminsky. Most problems occur when Botox is used in areas other than the brow and crow's-feet because it can interfere with a functional element of the face. Kathleen Harron, 40, experienced terrible problems when she had Botox injected on either side of her mouth to lessen her marionette lines. "I just wanted to lift the downturned corners of my mouth. The result was I couldn't chew properly," says the Brooklyn-based writer. Food would collect at the corners of Harron's mouth, requiring her to use a finger to

"I've never heard of Botox being stored anywhere in the body," says Mt. Kisco, New York, dermatologist David E. Bank, M.D. "It's broken down by the body over three to four months and flushed out of the system." In theory, repeated injections could lead to muscle atrophy and facial sagging over time, but that's why it's important to go to someone qualified who aims to minimize, not prevent, movement," says Bank.

lines" across the bridge of the nose have already entered into the pop-culture lexicon as a telltale sign of Botox use.

A safer alternative: Try Clarins Instant Smooth (\$26), a cosmetic version of Spackle that you dab onto wrinkles before putting on makeup to create a smooth surface.

Mesotherapy

Mesotherapy sounds like a fantastic idea. Touted as a way to get slimmer, sleeker thighs, it involves delivering a cell-boosting, fat-melting "cocktail" of ingredients into the skin's middle (or meso) layer via a series of injections. The injected ingredients may include pharmaceutical drugs, plant extracts, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, antibiotics, hormones, and anti-inflammatory agents. The technique has been used in Europe for decades and for about the past seven years in the United States, where a high incidence of adverse reactions has made it highly controversial. Bacterial infections, abscesses requiring ▶