

No minimum age for Botox

BOTULINUM toxin injection, more commonly as Botox, was first used more than 50 years ago to treat patients suffering from cerebral palsy.

Today, it is widely used for aesthetic purposes such as relaxing wrinkles, slimming the facial contour and hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating).

While most doctors The New Paper on Sunday spoke to said they do not perform the aesthetic procedure on anyone younger than 21, Dr Calvin Chan said he might consider. The medical director of Calvin Chan Aesthetic & Laser Clinic feels that no one is too young to use the substance.

"If there is a valid medical and aesthetic reason for seeking these treatments, and the kids are brought by their parents and obviously have parental consent, I think there is no issue treating them," he said.

There are currently no regulations on the age, weight and health of people requesting for Botox jabs.

Dr Chan's youngest Botox patient was a teenager who was brought in by her parents after her dentist referred her for jaw Botox treatments to reduce her teeth grinding when she sleeps.

Dr Patricia Yuen, a dermatologist at Pacific Healthcare Specialist Centre, feels that starting such treatments below the age of 20 is too early.

She said: "Facial structures change, so it is better to wait till after their 20s. Psychologically, it is not a prudent thing to do."

Dr Eileen Tan from Eileen Tan Skin, Laser and Hair Transplant Clinic agreed: "I personally feel that they may not be capable to assess the risk or benefits ratio of an aesthetic procedure and they may also be unrealistic with regard to their expectations."

Dr Wong Su-Ni, dermatologist from Dr SN Wong Skin, Hair, Nails & Laser Specialist Clinic, has turned away patients who sought the treatment.

"I turn away patients with unreasonably high expectations. Everyone responds differently even to the same treatment and treatment settings, results therefore often cannot be guaranteed," she explained.

Botox can only be purchased and administered by medical doctors who have been trained to use it.

The injections start from an average of \$200 per area and can run up to the thousands.

—ASHLEY CHIA