Botox® for Treatment of Achalasia

Achalasia

Achalasia is a motility disorder of the esophagus (tube that connects your mouth to your stomach) in which the muscles lose the ability to move food towards the stomach. As well, the lower esophageal sphincter (a ring of muscle between the esophagus and stomach) does not completely relax to let food and fluids pass into the stomach.

Signs and Symptoms of Achalasia

- difficulty swallowing (dysphagia) both solid foods and liquids
- a heavy sensation in the chest after eating; pain can sometimes be severe and mimic heart pain
- backflow or regurgitation of food and liquids which can cause coughing and choking
- weight loss.

Botox®

- Botox® is a drug made from a toxin produced by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum.
- Botox® is injected into specific muscles where it works to relax or paralyze muscle contractions or block certain nerve impulses.
- It can take several days for the effects of Botox® to become obvious. The benefits usually peak in 2 to 4 weeks and last about 3 to 4 months.
- Many factors effect the success of Botox® injections. A person may require 2 to 3 separate injections before experiencing noticeable benefits.
- The effects of Botox® gradually fade, and repeat injections may be considered.
Botox® and Achalasia

- Botox® is injected into the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) to relax the muscle, allowing food and fluids to pass more easily from the esophagus into the stomach.

- The injection is a good alternative for elderly patients or those who are not a good candidate for surgery.

Possible Side Effects and Restrictions of Botox®

- You should not have Botox® if you are pregnant or breast feeding, have a neuromuscular disorder (diseases that affect muscle control), or are allergic to eggs.

- Most people do not have any side effects however, possible side effects could include pain at the injection site, flu-like symptoms, dry mouth, headache, upset stomach, or allergic reaction.

- It is uncommon, but the toxin contained in Botox® can spread to other areas of the body beyond where it was injected.

- Tell your doctor if you are on blood thinners, muscle relaxants, sleeping aids, or allergy medications, as these could affect the results of the injection.

Your doctor wants to know if your swallowing has improved. Call the unit where you had your procedure done the next day and talk to a registered nurse.

Pasqua Hospital GI Unit: (306) 766-2441
Regina General Hospital Endoscopy Unit: (306) 766-4441