

FEBRUARY 2026

# GREENBRAE

*Dermatology*





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We'd love to hear your feedback, so we can continue to improve our service to you.

For questions or comments, please send us an email to [contact@gbderm.com](mailto:contact@gbderm.com)

## *Contact*

501 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Suite 200  
Greenbrae, California 94904  
(415) 925-0550  
[www.greenbraedermatology.com](http://www.greenbraedermatology.com)



# National Cancer Prevention Month: Why Your Skin Check Can't Wait

February is often associated with chocolates, roses, and the final stretch of winter. While many of us are focused on Valentine's Day, there is another critical event on the calendar that deserves your attention: National Cancer Prevention Month. This annual observance serves as a powerful reminder that taking proactive steps regarding your health can save your life.

When we think of cancer prevention, our minds often go to diet, exercise, or smoking cessation. While these are vital, we frequently overlook the body's largest organ: the skin. Skin cancer remains the most common form of cancer in the United States, yet it is also one of the most preventable and treatable types when detected early.

This month, we are looking at why you should prioritize a skin cancer exam. It might seem counterintuitive to think about sun damage when you are bundled up in a winter coat, but February is actually the ideal time to visit your dermatologist. By understanding the risks and knowing what to look for, you can take control of your health before the summer sun returns.

## The Reality of Skin Cancer Statistics

It is easy to assume that skin cancer only happens to people who spend every day at the beach or use tanning beds religiously. The reality is far more widespread. Current estimates suggest that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. This statistic includes everyone, regardless of skin tone, age, or lifestyle.

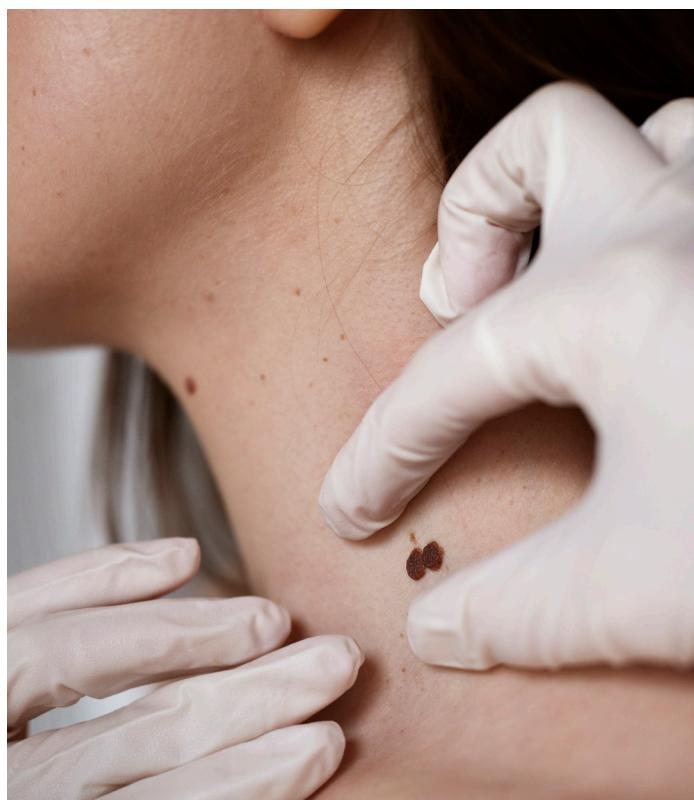
The three most common types of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma. Basal and squamous cell carcinomas are highly treatable and rarely spread to other parts of the body, though they can be disfiguring if left unchecked. Melanoma, however, is more aggressive. It accounts for a small percentage of skin cancer cases but causes the majority of skin cancer deaths.

The good news is that the five-year survival rate for melanoma is 99% when it is detected early. This is why routine exams are not just a precaution; they are a necessity. National Cancer Prevention Month is the push many of us need to stop delaying these appointments.

## Why Winter is the Perfect Time for a Check-Up

Scheduling a skin exam in February makes strategic sense for several reasons. During the summer months, your skin is often tanned or sunburned, which can sometimes make it difficult for dermatologists to distinguish between sun damage and potentially cancerous moles.

In the winter, your skin is generally at its palest. This contrast makes it easier for a doctor to spot abnormalities, new growths, or changes in pigmentation. Additionally, if you do require a biopsy or a minor procedure to remove a suspicious mole, healing is often easier in the winter. You are less likely to expose the



healing site to direct sunlight or irritate it with sweat and outdoor activities.

Getting checked now also gives you a clean slate before the warmer months arrive. You can head into spring knowing your baseline and understanding exactly what precautions you need to take based on your specific risk profile.

## What Happens During a Skin Exam?

Fear of the unknown or embarrassment often keeps people from making an appointment. Knowing what to expect can alleviate that anxiety. A skin cancer exam is generally quick, painless, and non-invasive.

When you arrive at the dermatology office, you will likely be asked to change into a medical gown. Your healthcare provider will then perform a visual inspection of your skin from head to toe. They aren't just looking at your arms and face; they will check your scalp, behind your ears, between your toes, and even your fingernails. Skin cancer can hide in places that never see the sun.

Healthcare providers often use a small, handheld magnification device called a dermatoscope. This allows them to see the structures of the skin beneath the surface. If they find a spot that looks suspicious, they might take a small biopsy, which feels similar to a quick pinch. The entire process usually takes less than 15 minutes. It is a very small investment of time for significant peace of mind.

## The ABCDEs of Melanoma

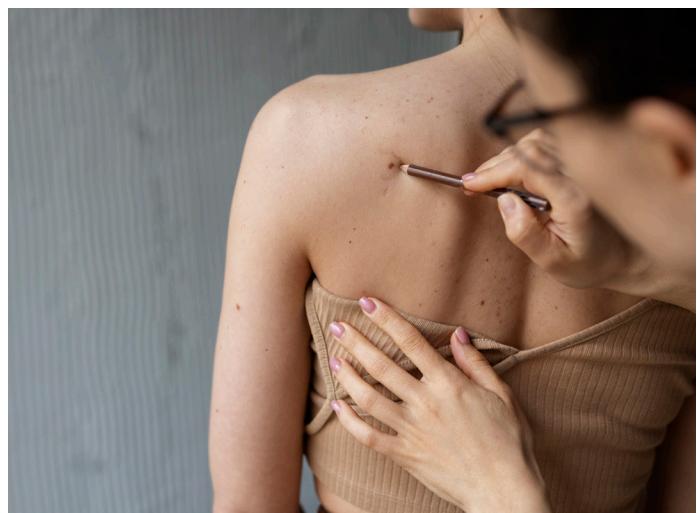
While an annual professional exam is crucial, you are the one living in your skin every day. You are the most likely person to notice if something changes. Dermatologists recommend performing self-exams once a month. To do this effectively, you need to know what you are looking for.

The medical community uses the "ABCDE" rule to help patients identify potential melanoma:

**Asymmetry:** Draw an imaginary line down the middle of the mole. If one half does not match the other, it is asymmetrical. Benign moles are usually symmetrical.

**Border:** Look at the edges of the mole. Benign moles usually have smooth, even borders. Early melanomas tend to have uneven, scalloped, or notched edges.

**Color:** Most benign moles are a single shade of brown. A warning sign is a mole



that contains multiple colors or shades, such as different tans, browns, blacks, or even reds, whites, or blues.

**Diameter:** Melanomas are usually larger in diameter than the eraser on your pencil (about 6mm), although they can be smaller when they are first detected.

**Evolving:** This is perhaps the most important factor. Any change in size, shape, color, or elevation of a spot on your skin, or any new symptom like bleeding, itching, or crusting, points to danger. If a mole starts to look different from the others, get it checked.

## Risk Factors You Can't Ignore

Everyone is at risk for skin cancer, but certain factors can increase your likelihood of developing it. Understanding your risk profile helps you and your doctor determine how vigilant you need to be.

People with fair skin that burns easily, those with red or blond hair, and those with light-colored eyes naturally have less melanin protection against UV rays. However, people with darker skin tones are also at risk and are often diagnosed at later stages because of the misconception that they are immune. In people of color, skin cancer often appears in less obvious areas, such as the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet.

Your history matters as well. If you had severe, blistering sunburns as a child



or teenager, your risk increases significantly. A family history of skin cancer also plays a role, as does having a large number of moles on your body.

## Prioritize Your Health This February

We often put everyone else's needs before our own, but your health is the foundation of everything else you do. This February, in honor of National Cancer Prevention Month, make a commitment to your future self.

A skin check is a simple, proactive step that offers reassurance and protection. Don't wait for a suspicious spot to appear. Call Greenbrae Dermatology today, schedule your annual exam, and enjoy the rest of the year knowing you have taken the best possible care of your skin.



# Love Your Look: Get Valentine's Day Ready with Radiesse

Valentine's Day often brings a flurry of excitement. Whether you have a romantic dinner planned with a significant other, a "Galentine's" brunch with friends, or simply want to treat yourself to some self-care, looking and feeling your best is usually top of the agenda. While the perfect outfit and makeup can do wonders, true confidence starts with how you feel about your skin.

If you've noticed that your reflection looks a little more tired than usual, or that gravity is starting to take its toll on your facial contours, you aren't alone. As we age, our natural collagen production slows down, leading to volume loss, sagging, and the formation of deep lines. Skincare routines are essential, but sometimes we need a little extra help to turn back the clock.

Enter Radiesse. This isn't just another filler; it's a powerful tool in aesthetic medicine designed to restore volume and stimulate your body's natural regenerative processes. If you are looking for a treatment that offers immediate gratification with

long-lasting benefits, Radiesse might be your perfect match this Valentine's season.

## Understanding the Aging Process

To appreciate what Radiesse does, it helps to understand why our faces change over time. In our youth, our skin is supported by a robust network of collagen and elastin. This structure keeps our cheeks high, our jawlines sharp, and our skin smooth.

However, starting in our mid-20s, we lose about 1% of our collagen every year. By the time we reach our 40s and 50s, that loss accelerates. The fat pads in our face also begin to shrink and shift downward. The result? The “Triangle of Youth”—high cheekbones and a defined chin—inverts. We start to see heaviness in the lower face, hollowing in the cheeks, and deeper nasolabial folds (smile lines).

Topical creams can hydrate the surface, but they cannot replace lost structural volume deep beneath the skin. That is where injectable treatments come into play.

## What Makes Radiesse Unique?

Radiesse is a dermal filler, but it works differently than the hyaluronic acid (HA) fillers you might be familiar with. It is comprised of Calcium Hydroxylapatite (CaHA) microspheres suspended in a water-based gel carrier.

When injected, it performs a double duty:

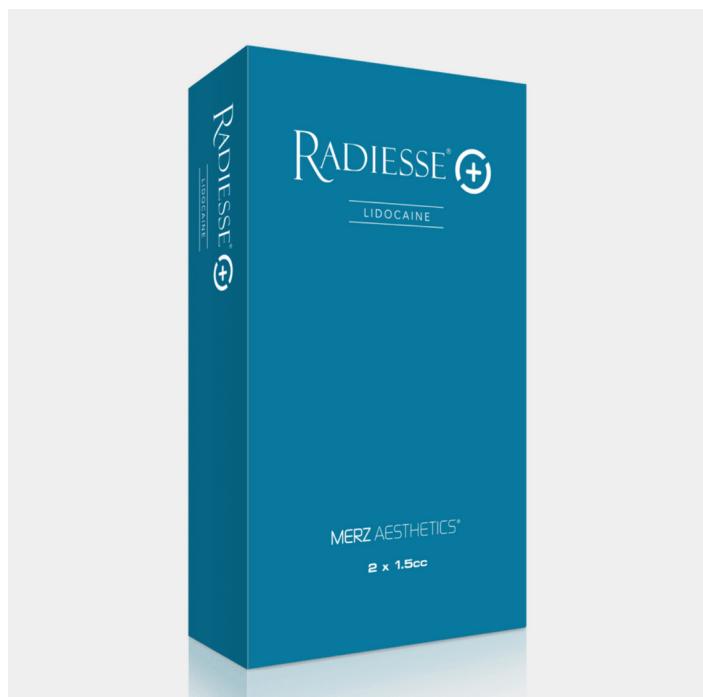
**Immediate Volume:** The gel carrier provides an instant lift and fill. You walk out of the office seeing a noticeable difference in contour and smoothing of wrinkles.

**Collagen Stimulation:** This is the “secret weapon” of Radiesse. Over time, the CaHA microspheres act as a scaffold, stimulating your body to produce its own fresh collagen and elastin.

As the gel carries dissipates over a few months, your natural tissue takes its place. This means the results look and feel incredibly natural because, in part, they are you.

## Key Areas to Treat for a Valentine's Glow

Radiesse is incredibly versatile. Here are the key areas where it can make a



significant impact on your overall appearance just in time for your Valentine's plans.

## Defining the Jawline

A sharp, defined jawline is a universal sign of youth and vitality. Mild to moderate jowling can soften the separation between the face and neck, making us look older than we feel. Radiesse has a high viscosity and elasticity (G-prime), meaning it is sturdy enough to mimic bone structure. When placed along the jawline, it creates crisp definition and camouflages early jowls, giving the face a more sculpted, powerful look.

## Lifting the Cheeks

Volume loss in the mid-face is one of the first signs of aging. When the cheeks flatten, the skin below them sags, contributing to smile lines. By restoring volume to the cheeks with Radiesse, you don't just get apple-cheeked youthfulness; you also get a "liquid lift" effect that pulls up the lower face, softening nasolabial folds indirectly.

## Smoothing Smile Lines

Deep lines running from the nose to the corners of the mouth (nasolabial folds) and from the corners of the mouth down to the chin (marionette lines) can make you look unhappy or stern, even when you aren't. Radiesse fills these folds effectively, creating a smoother transition between facial zones and restoring a

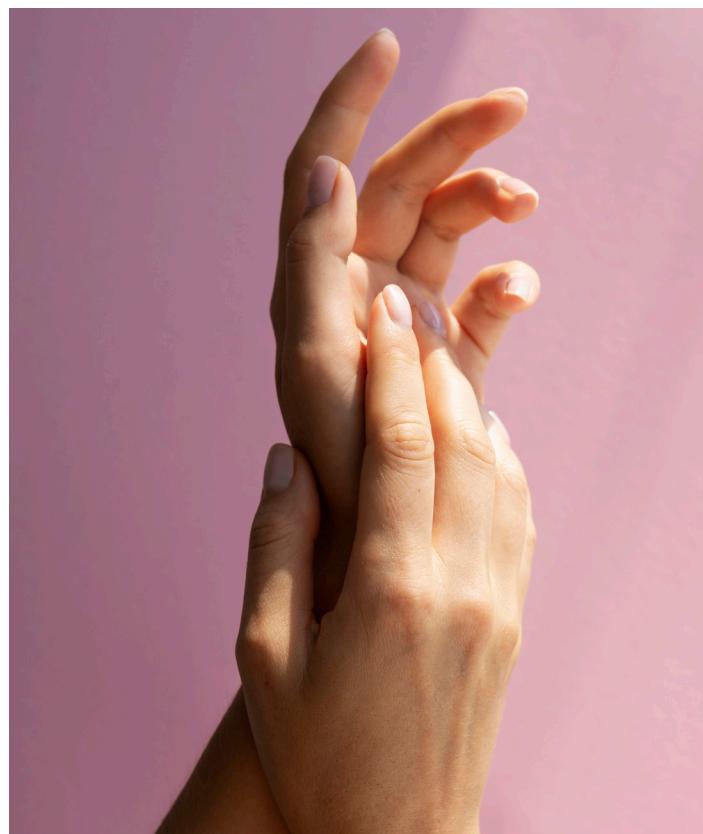
softer, more rested expression.

## Don't Forget the Hands

Here is a harsh truth: your face might look 30, but your hands can reveal your true age. The skin on the back of the hands is thin, and as we lose volume, tendons and veins become prominent. Radiesse is FDA-approved for hand rejuvenation. It restores volume to the back of the hands, minimizing the visibility of veins and providing a smoother, more youthful appearance. It's the perfect complement to a fresh Valentine's manicure.

## The Timeline: When to Book

If you want to be ready for February 14th, timing is everything. While Radiesse provides immediate results, aesthetic



treatments involve needles, which means there is always a risk of mild swelling or bruising.

Ideally, you should book your appointment 2 to 4 weeks before your event.

**Week 1:** You will see the immediate lift from the gel carrier. You may have some swelling or minor bruising, which can be covered with makeup after the first 24 hours.

**Week 2-3:** Any swelling subsides, and the product “settles” into the tissue, looking softer and more natural.

**Week 4:** You are fully healed, glowing, and camera-ready.

Starting early also gives your healthcare provider time to do a follow-up assessment and add a “touch-up” if necessary to ensure perfect symmetry.

### Longevity: The Gift That Keeps on Giving

One of the most appealing aspects of Radiesse is its durability. While many hyaluronic acid fillers last between 6 to 12 months, the results from Radiesse can last up to 15 months or more in many patients.

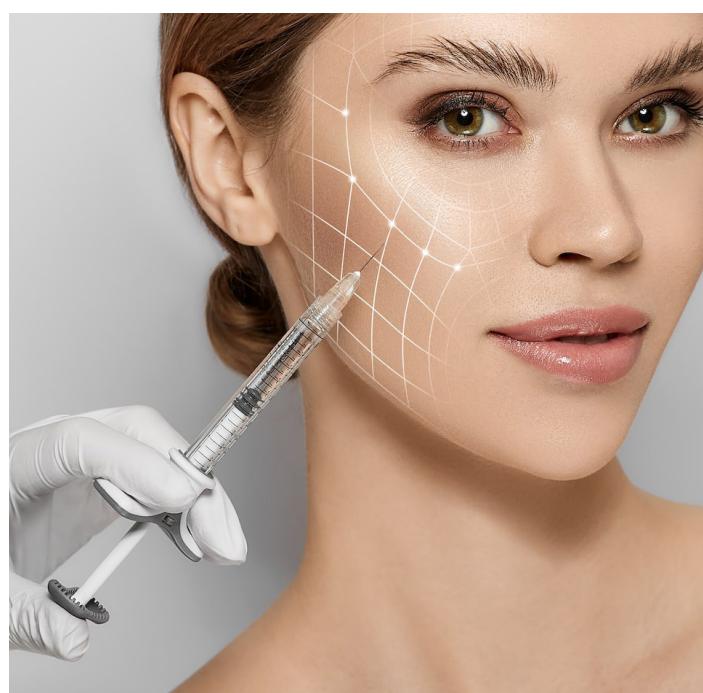
This longevity makes it a cost-effective choice for those looking for sustained maintenance of their look. You aren’t just paying for a temporary fix for a single holiday; you are investing in over a

year of improved confidence. Furthermore, because of the biostimulation of collagen, even after the product has fully metabolized, your skin quality often remains better than it was pre-treatment because of the new structural proteins your body created.

### Fall in Love with Your Reflection

Radiesse offers a unique blend of immediate satisfaction and long-term biological benefits. By restoring lost volume and rebuilding your skin’s collagen foundation, you can achieve a refreshed, contoured look that feels authentic.

Whether you are planning a romantic evening out or a cozy night in, knowing you look your absolute best is the ultimate confidence booster. Don’t wait until the last minute—schedule your consultation today to ensure you are glowing by mid-February.





# Xeomin vs. Botox: Which Treatment is Right for You?

When you start noticing those first few fine lines turning into deeper wrinkles, the world of medical aesthetics can suddenly feel very vast. For decades, Botox has been the household name, the go-to solution for smoothing out foreheads and crow's feet. But in recent years, a new contender has gained serious traction: Xeomin.

If you're standing in front of the mirror pulling back your skin and wondering which injectable is the best choice, you aren't alone. Both treatments are FDA-approved, derived from the same bacterium, and work in similar ways to relax muscles and reduce wrinkles. Yet, they have distinct differences that might make one a better fit for your lifestyle and biology than the other.

This guide breaks down the science, effectiveness, and important differences between Xeomin and Botox so you can walk into your next consultation with confidence.

## Understanding Neurotoxins: How They Work

Before diving into the “versus” aspect, it helps to understand what these products actually do. Both Botox (onabotulinumtoxinA) and Xeomin (incobotulinumtoxinA) belong to a class of injectables known as neuromodulators.

When injected into specific facial muscles, these neurotoxins block the release of acetylcholine, a chemical messenger that triggers muscle contractions. By temporarily relaxing these muscles, the skin above them smooths out, softening existing wrinkles and preventing new ones from deepening.

While they share the same mechanism of action, the way they are manufactured and formulated sets them apart.

### What is Botox?

Botox Cosmetic, manufactured by Allergan, was the first drug of its kind to be approved by the FDA for cosmetic use. It has a long track record of safety and efficacy, having been used for decades not just for wrinkles, but for medical conditions like chronic migraines, excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis), and muscle spasms.

Botox is formulated with a complex of proteins surrounding the active molecule. These accessory proteins act as a protective coating, but they also play a role in how the body interacts with the

drug.

### What is Xeomin?

Xeomin, made by Merz Aesthetics, is often referred to as “naked Botox.” FDA-approved for cosmetic use in 2011, Xeomin is a more purified form of the neurotoxin. During the manufacturing process, the accessory proteins found in Botox are filtered out, leaving only the active therapeutic component.

This lack of additives is Xeomin’s primary selling point. It appeals to those looking for a “cleaner” injectable and has specific implications for patients who may have built up a tolerance to other treatments.

### Key Differences Between Xeomin and Botox

While the end result—smoother skin—is often indistinguishable to the naked eye, the journey there varies slightly between the two.





## 1. The Protein Factor (Purity)

The most significant scientific difference lies in the formulation. Because Botox includes accessory proteins, there is a rare but possible chance that a patient's immune system could develop antibodies to these proteins over time. If this happens, the body might resist the treatment, making Botox less effective or requiring higher doses to achieve the same result.

Xeomin, lacking these surface proteins, is less likely to trigger antibody formation. For patients who feel like Botox "just doesn't work like it used to," switching to Xeomin often provides a solution because the body doesn't recognize it as a foreign invader in the same way.

## 2. Storage and Stability

Botox requires refrigeration before use. This cold-chain requirement is standard for many biologics but adds a layer of logistical complexity for providers.

Xeomin, conversely, does not need to be refrigerated before reconstitution. This stability makes distribution and storage easier for clinics, although this difference rarely impacts the patient experience directly.

## 3. Onset of Results

Patience is a virtue, especially with injectables. Generally, you can expect to see results from Botox within 3 to 7 days, with full effects visible around the two-week mark.

Xeomin has a comparable timeline, though some studies and anecdotal evidence suggest it might have a slightly slower onset, taking 5 to 7 days to kick in. However, once active, the muscle relaxation is just as potent.

## 4. Diffusion and Spread

"Diffusion" refers to how much the product spreads from the injection site. There is a common belief in the aesthetics community that Xeomin may diffuse slightly more than Botox. This can be a benefit or a drawback depending on the area being treated.

For covering larger areas like the forehead, a product that spreads easily can offer a softer, more natural look. For areas requiring extreme precision, like around the eyes or lips, a provider might prefer the tighter control of Botox. However, skilled injectors can manipulate both products effectively to

achieve the desired outcome.

## Effectiveness and Longevity: Which Lasts Longer?

The million-dollar question for most patients is: “How long will I look wrinkle-free?”

Clinical studies generally show that Botox and Xeomin are non-inferior to one another. This means they are equally effective. Both treatments typically last between 3 to 4 months.

However, individual metabolism plays a huge role. Some “fast metabolizers” may find their results fade in 8 weeks, while others enjoy smooth skin for up to 6 months. Factors that influence longevity include:

**Dosage:** Higher units often equal longer duration.

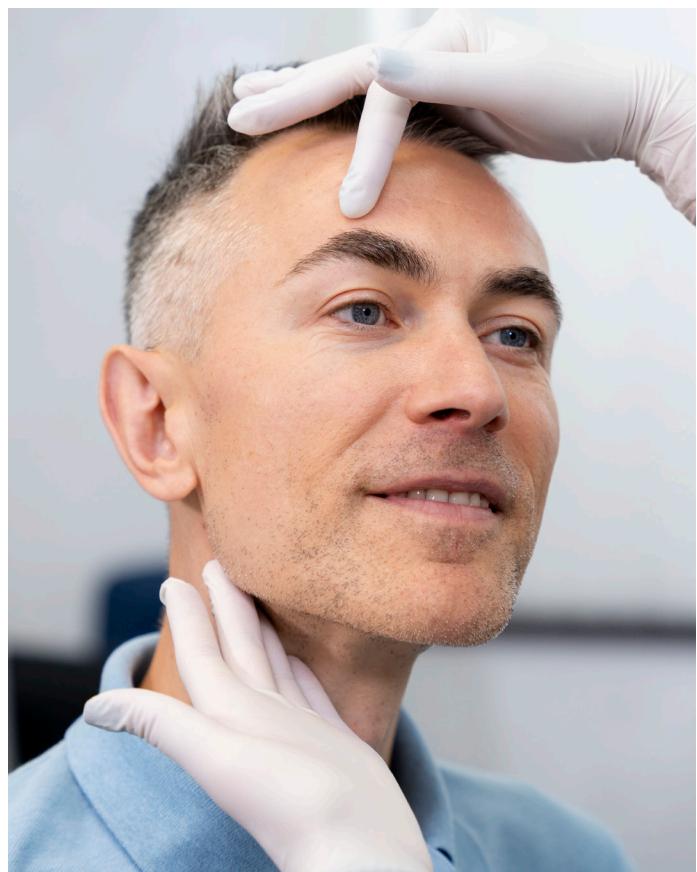
**Muscle Strength:** Stronger muscles may overcome the toxin faster.

**Activity Level:** High-intensity athletes sometimes metabolize the product more quickly.

There is no definitive data proving one brand consistently outlasts the other across the general population.

## Is One Safer Than the Other?

Both Botox and Xeomin are FDA-approved and have excellent safety



profiles when administered by licensed, trained professionals. Side effects are generally mild and temporary, including bruising or swelling at the injection site.

## The Verdict

Ultimately, the skill of the injector matters far more than the brand of the neurotoxin. A talented healthcare provider can achieve stunning, natural results with either Botox or Xeomin.

If you are new to aesthetics, discuss your goals and concerns during your consultation. Whether you choose the established veteran or the purified newcomer, both Xeomin and Botox offer a reliable path to refreshing your look and boosting your confidence.