



Enforcement Notice:

'Botox' and other botulinum toxin products

Who we are

We are the [Committee of Advertising Practice](#) (CAP). We write the advertising rules, which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK's independent advertising regulator. You can read about the UK advertising regulatory system [on the ASA website](#).

Why are we contacting you?

We understand that you are using your social media presence to advertise botulinum toxin products – which are prescription-only medicines (POMs) – to the public. 'Botox' is the most ubiquitous trademarked name for botulinum toxin type A products, but other brands are available, including 'Vistabel', 'Dysport', 'Bocouture', and 'Azzalure'.

Any promotion of POMs to the public is a clear-cut breach of the CAP Code (rule [12.12](#)). It is also an offence under the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (HMRs). This is the case even if the POM is being administered by a registered medical professional and also applies to all direct to consumer promotions of POMs including those on your website, which should also comply.

Scope

This notice is relevant to the direct or indirect promotion of botulinum toxin products to the public via social media platforms for medical or cosmetic purposes.

Take immediate action to ensure that your advertising complies. If we continue to see problematic advertising of this nature we will take targeted enforcement action to ensure a level-playing-field across the industry. This may include – where advertisers are unwilling to comply – referring them to our [legal backstop](#).

Guidance

You need to consider the types of products you administer (POMs, non-POMs, both) and ensure that your advertising neither directly promotes a POM to consumers, nor indirectly promotes a POM by implying that one may be offered.



Remove direct references to Botox, other brand names or allusions to them such as "Beautytox" or "Beautox". For example, offering a ["Botox treatment"](#) as a competition prize or at a discounted price, would be considered an advertisement for a POM.



Do not substitute direct references to POMs with other indirect phrases such as "facial freezing injection treatments". This will be [considered by the ASA](#) to have the same effect as promoting a POM.



Avoid references to treating medical conditions in a way which may indicate the promotion of a POM, for example ["injections for excessive sweating" \(hyperhidrosis\)](#).

What if I only administer POMs?

In short, Botox and other POMs cannot be advertised to the public. You should focus on aspects of your service which do not relate directly to the provision of a POM.



Promote the consultation itself, with claims such as "a consultation for the treatment of lines and wrinkles" likely to be acceptable.



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What if I administer POMs and non-POMs?

Non-POMs, such as dermal fillers, may be offered provided there is no implication that a POM is also available.



Be specific and use terms such as “cosmetic fillers” or “injectable fillers” which make it expressly clear that you are only advertising your non-POM “filler”.



Do not describe your non-POM product range in an ambiguous way. For instance, avoid juxtapositions such as “anti-wrinkle injections and dermal fillers” which could imply that the “injections” are POMs.

Appendix: Code rules, legislation and useful reading

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [MHRA's The Blue Guide: Advertising and Promotion of Medicines in the UK](#) which explains the provisions and requirements laid down in the legislation on advertising medicines.

Relevant [CAP Code](#) rules:



12.12 Prescription-only medicines or prescription-only medical treatments may not be advertised to the public.

Relevant legislation:



The [Human Medicines Regulations 2012](#) prohibit the publishing of an “advertisement that is likely to lead to the use of a prescription only medicine”, as laid out in Chapter 2, *Advertising to the public*, 284 (1).

Want more? See our advice on: [Anti-ageing: Botulinum toxin products](#), [Hyperhidrosis](#) and [Healthcare: Prescription-only medicine](#)
Our [Copy Advice team](#) offer a free, confidential bespoke pre-publication advice service.