



## Are Gen Zers Overdoing It With Botox?

Mira Miller | September 19, 2024



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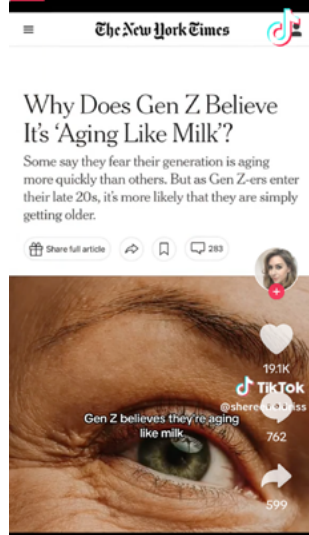
***While anti-aging treatments like Botox used to be reserved for older individuals, younger people are now accessing these treatments more and more — and some say it's having the opposite of the desired effect.***

There was once a time when cosmetic procedures to treat wrinkles and fine lines were only common among those who were, well, aging — but social media has ushered in a new era.

A quick TikTok or Instagram scroll reveals that much of Gen Z, the generation born between 1997 and 2012, is partaking in these cosmetic treatments at a much younger age. The idea is that getting these procedures before any wrinkles actually appear can act as a kind of prevention, stopping the physical manifestations of aging before they even begin.

But the internet also has a theory that Gen Z is aging faster than the generation before them. Multiple thinkpieces have been written about why exactly today's teenagers and young adults already look far older than their age, or why they're "aging like milk" — a highly searched term on Google in 2024.

While theories about why youngsters seem to be aging quickly vary from stress to ultra-processed foods to lifestyle factors, many also believe that Gen Z is overdoing it with cosmetic procedures. And although they're undergoing these treatments with the goal of preserving their youth, it may sometimes be having the opposite effect.



## The role of social media

“Social media, celebrity culture, and influencers play a significant part in promoting cosmetic treatments as more mainstream for younger ages and Gen Z,” says Azza Halim, M.D., an aesthetic medicine, anti-aging, and regenerative medicine physician. “Their concept of ‘aging gracefully’ includes earlier interventions.”

Indeed, it seems that influencer culture has normalized getting cosmetic procedures beginning at a much younger age, putting increased pressure on individuals to seek a flawless appearance that is unimpeded by the passage of time.

According to **Steven Williams, M.D.**, a board-certified plastic surgeon and the president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), this trend also has to do with the emergence of content creation and the frequency with which we are all exposed to images of ourselves nowadays. Gen Z is particularly active online and may more often be faced with their own image, bringing to light any small imperfections they may have otherwise not noticed.

“Naturally, this shift has brought greater attention to normal aging and preventative treatments to maintain youthful looks,” Williams tells Healthnews. “This means that Gen Z is looking for ways to prevent or slow down aging at earlier ages than previous generations.”

Halim adds that the availability of Medspa treatments has also played a role in increasing accessibility.

And the change isn’t just visible online. In their work, Halim and Williams both say the demographics of patients have changed over the years. While Botox and filler patients were previously mostly upwards of 40 years old, it is now far more common for individuals in their 20s and 30s to seek out these procedures.

Reddit users have been discussing this trend in the NYCinfluencersnark thread recently after one user shared influencer Amanda Pulitano’s video of herself getting Botox for the first time.

“why are influencers in their teens and early twenties getting literal BOTOX,” the original poster wrote. “this actually makes me so sad.”

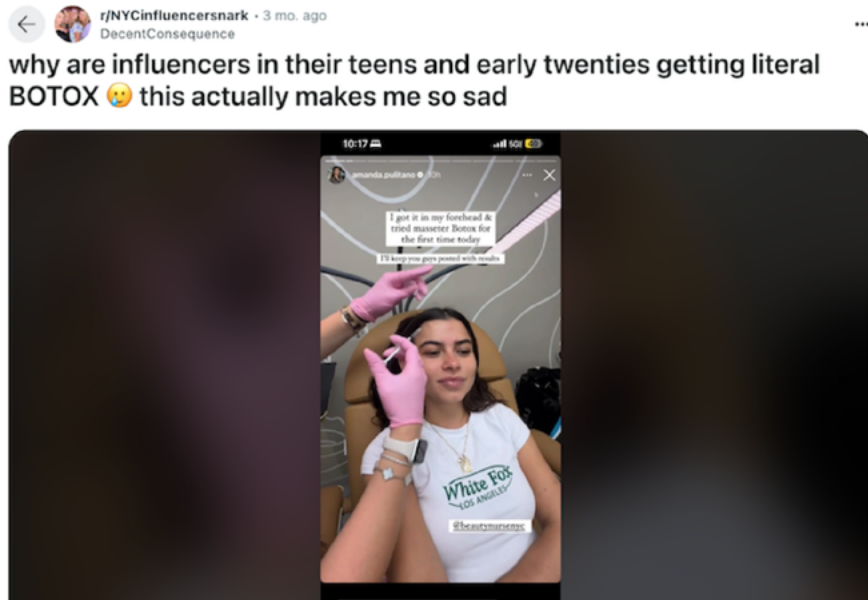


Image by Healthnews via Reddit

Hundreds of Reddit users then weighed in, with many agreeing that kids these days no longer look like kids.

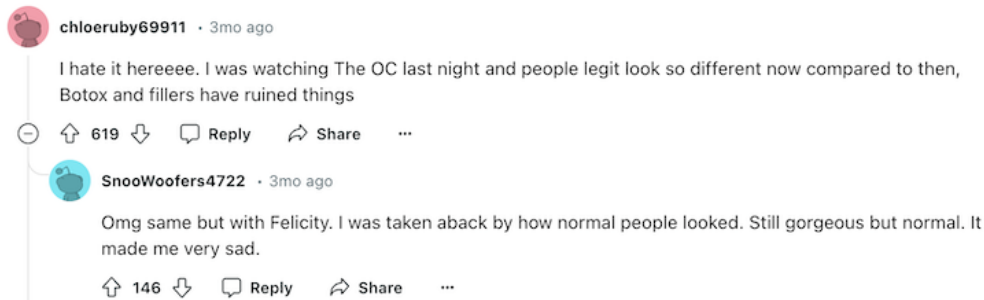


Image by Healthnews via Reddit

### What is ‘baby Botox?’

“Baby Botox” is another term for preventative botox. It involves using smaller doses of Botox to prevent wrinkles from forming, and it’s typically done to people in their 20s or early 30s.

“This approach is taken before deep lines or wrinkles become etched into the skin,” Halim says. “When one relaxes the facial muscles that cause wrinkles (such as those in the forehead or around the eyes), Botox can prevent lines from becoming deeper or even forming.”

The small doses used during “baby Botox” are less likely to result in a “frozen face,” Halim says — a name for the unmovable, stiff appearance sometimes associated with too much Botox.

However, there are still potential risks. Halim says migration, where the Botox moves to different parts of the face, can occur, creating uneven results or affecting muscles that should not be paralyzed. This can result in heaviness, eyelid droop, dry eye, blurry vision, or double vision.

## Why might Botox be making Gen Z look older?

Halim says the effectiveness of Botox depends on the injection technique. Often, we see botched cases when someone seeks treatment from an unlicensed or inexperienced provider. As Botox's popularity has grown, so too has the number of healthcare providers offering the service without much expertise, leading to an increase in botched cases.

And while the very purpose of Botox is to paralyze facial muscles, Halim says overuse or too much too often can weaken facial muscles too much.

"Too much of a good thing is not always good," she tells Healthnews. "Proper assessment and treatment by a skilled professional is how to best avoid that 'frozen look,' overdone results, or aged results."

Botox can also sometimes be a "gateway" procedure, Halim explains. In other words, patients sometimes become addicted to the treatment and get it more often than needed, and they may also seek other, more drastic cosmetic procedures that can significantly impact their appearance.

"The biggest risk of preventative Botox is that the patient may not need it," Williams adds. "It can be challenging to treat something that hasn't happened yet."

While neuromodulators, when applied to the correct area, can prevent lines and wrinkling from forming, he says it takes some insight to know where these areas will be, which isn't always possible.

Ultimately, whether or not a young person wants to receive Botox or cosmetic procedures is a personal choice, but ensuring it is done in a safe way is extremely important.

"While many people consider [Botox] a proactive approach to aging, there are both risks and benefits associated with anything," she says. "Seeking a skilled, qualified injector that understands proper technique and facial anatomy is always key."

<https://healthnews.com/news/gen-z-botox-obsession/>