

Her husband may have almost been brought down by a sex scandal, but it is a prick of a different kind that threatens the political career of Hilary Rodham Clinton. The word is that Clinton is having Botox, and some pundits say this could topple her bid for the White House.

Newspaper reports show Hilary suddenly looking suspiciously wrinkle-free, and attribute this to a “lethal poison made from rotting sausages that paralyzes muscles”. As an anti-Clinton propaganda campaign, this really can’t be beat. Who wants a President who is so duplicitous she thinks nothing of injecting rank snarlers into her face, just so she can’t form genuine facial expressions?

What truly disturbs me about the Clinton story, though, is the bad rap Botox is getting. Let me nail my political colours to the wall and say that I am a big Botox fan. I have been using it for two years now and I can assure you that despite those newspaper reports, my habit in no way involves stuffing rancid sausage meat in a hypodermic. It is laughable to compare this highly purified natural protein manufactured by pharmaceutical giants Allergan to sausage fungus.

Botox has just celebrated its 20th birthday. It is the fastest-growing cosmetic surgical procedure in the world, with 400 per cent growth in the past five years alone. It’s also not true that Botox ‘paralyzes’ muscles; it blocks the message receptors in the muscles so your muscle no longer knows it is supposed to frown. It doesn’t damage facial tissue, and your frown returns naturally after four months.

The Clinton furore points out the ongoing wilful ignorance that many people have when it comes to Botox. As a fashion and beauty editor, I hear people beating up on Botox all the time. I’ve come to the conclusion that people feel malicious towards this beauty wonder because it is, quite literally, too good to be true.

The other day I sat down to lunch with a group of friends. The conversation immediately turned into a Botox-bagging session as they discussed all those celebrities with their immobilised concrete faces.

“I get Botox, you know,” I told them. “Yes, but you don’t have it now, do you?” one of them replied, eyeing me suspiciously. “I can see your face moving!”

Nonsense! I was injected to the gunwales with it. One of the great myths of Botox is that it freezes the face. In fact, in

the right hands, Botox is far smarter than that. I can still frown – just not so much that it causes those sullen tram tracks between my eyes. I still smile, but the laugh lines that once pleated around my eyes and down my cheeks have disappeared.

I’m happy to tell people I use Botox. These days it seems positively old-fashioned not to talk about it. In my office, “Who does your Botox?” qualifies as water-cooler chat. On beauty lunches, I’ll compare Botox practitioners and their styles with other beauty editors. My doctor, Teresa Cattin at FaceWorks, practices the French Botox technique – she is a fan of small quantities, and lots of injections in areas including the eye socket line.

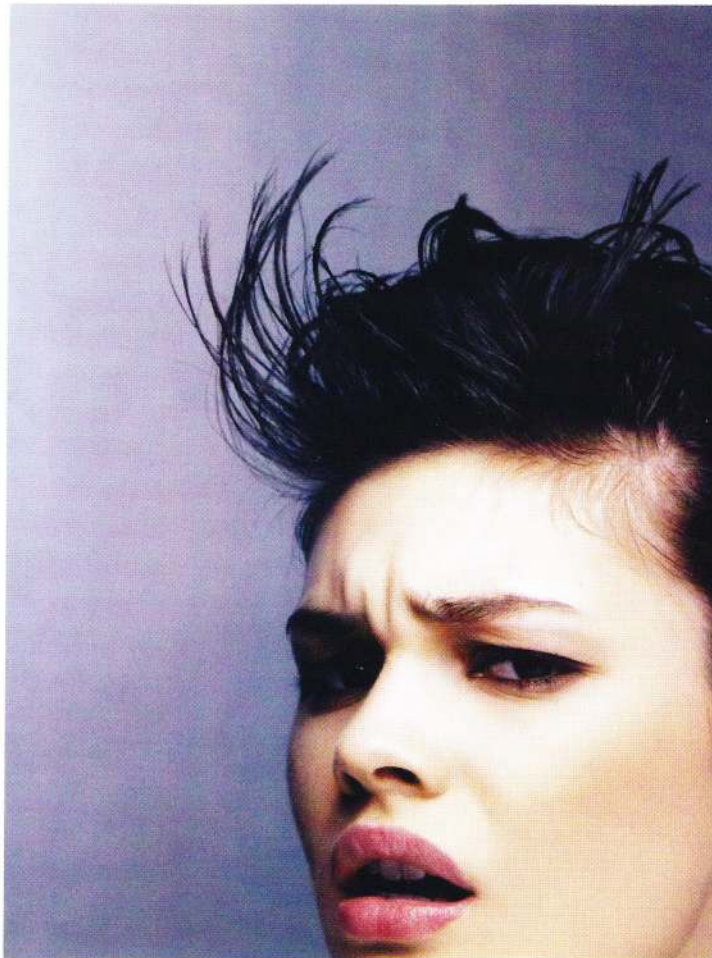
Once every four months, I lie on the surgical chair in her office and hug a lavender-scented “Botox bear” while she gives me up to 10 little injections. I hug the teddy because the injections hurt me. I am not good with needles and I hate my visits.

I always think that maybe I won’t go back again and sit in that chair. Maybe I don’t really need Botox. Then the four-month clock ticks over and my wrinkles come back with a vengeance. Friends begin to tell me I look very tired when actually I’m just fine, thanks.

I slink back to Teresa with my tail between my legs.

Because I am an editor, I receive many pottles of \$500 creams and beauty treatments all of them cost me nix. But I truly believe that if I weren’t a beauty editor, I would willingly pay for Botox. I’m not the kind of girl who gets luxury facials for the sake of it. I want treatments that give real, tangible results.

Botox, then, is money well spent: a fact that Americans may wish to consider when they go to the polls. If Hilary really is using Botox, then she’s a woman who is driven by achieving results too. And there’s nothing wrong with that. ❖



TO THE POINT

RunwayReporter.com’s acerbic editor Stacy Gregg explains why, despite the sausage fungus, she’s still got a smile on her face about Botox.