



beauty news, skin, technology

On-Demand Botox—as in Botox in Your Home—Is Now a Thing

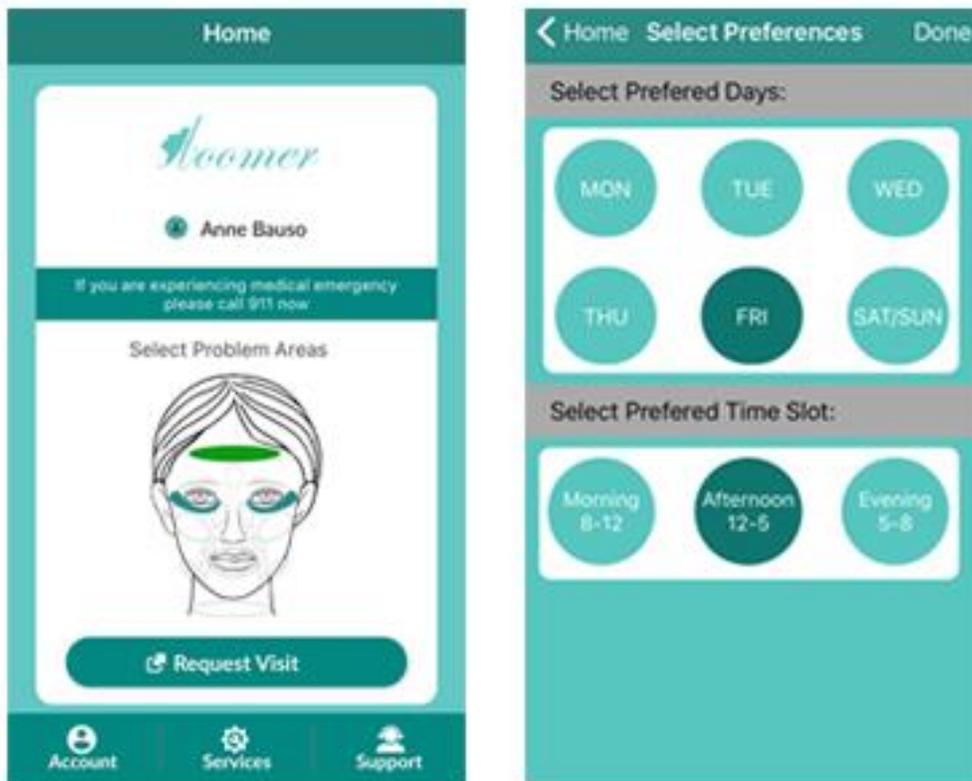
BY ANNE BAUSO, ASSISTANT DIGITAL EDITOR, JANUARY 27, 2016, 8:00:00 AM



In-home beauty services are on the rise: With just a few taps on your smartphone, you can get blowouts, manis, makeup, heck, even facials and massages, right in your living room. Everything is "the Uber of" something. So perhaps it was inevitable that the most popular nonsurgical cosmetic treatment of all time—yes, Botox—would become an app-enabled beauty treatment. That innovation is now a reality, thanks to Boomer, a brand-new Botox-on-demand service.

Boomer's founder, New York City–based dermatologist Valerie Goldburt, says she had the idea during one of her many 60-mile drives to her Long Island dermatology practice, where she saw thousands of patients. "I

had a eureka moment: I realized that if I'm traveling to see my patients, they're traveling to see me, too, so we were all spending time trying to get somewhere," she says. "So it was a whole lot of driving and waiting, and I just thought that there had to be a better way. This was around the time that Uber was becoming more and more popular, so I started to think about how to bring minimally invasive procedures to patients. Combining the tech space and the Uber-like on-demand space with what I was already doing just made sense."



As appealing as the notion of do-as-little-as-possible skin care may be, there are also some pretty obvious concerns. And trust me, my worried *what the...?* reaction to the idea of a smartphone-connected, wrinkle-thwarting-fluid delivery system was just the tip of the iceberg. "There is a lot that concerns me about on-demand home Botox," says Rebecca Kazin, a Baltimore-based dermatologist and a clinical professor in the department of dermatology at Johns Hopkins. Of her many reservations, one of the biggest was who would be administering the treatments. "Are these trained dermatologists? Is it nurses or nurse practitioners?" New York City-based dermatologist Kenneth Mark echoes this concern: "The most important thing with any injectable procedure is who's doing it," he says. "Fortunately, these procedures are relatively noninvasive and extremely safe, but the injector's skill level; knowledge of how, what, and where to inject; and ability to make proper clinical judgments is extremely important."

Such unease is understandable, but Goldburt is quick to point out that the dermatologists in Boomer's network are highly trained. "These are all board-certified dermatologists," she says. "It's people that I know and trust, my colleagues. Board certification is a really complex and difficult process—it requires years and years of training, so it's a really great vetting process in and of itself." She adds that Boomer makes sure that "the person has a good track record. Again, right now it's all people I know personally and trust."

But what about the administering of a muscle-paralyzing fluid in an uncontrolled, non-medically-equipped setting? "Botox—or any injectable—is best done in a sterile medical environment," says Barry Weintraub, a New York City plastic surgeon and national spokesperson for the American Society of Plastic Surgery. "Many people erroneously think that injectables, being non-invasives, are not as serious as surgeries. This is absolutely not the case. Botox is not a stop-in-for-a-five-minute-injection type of service. Setting up the proper sterile environment takes time and effort." Mark agrees but allows that there could be value in the at-home aspect: "Botox is a medical procedure and needs to have a certain amount of respect," he says. "The office is obviously a more serious environment than the home. With that said, the home is more relaxing and

comforting than a doctor's office. There are some patients who are legitimately anxious when they go to a doctor's office, and their blood pressure can even go up. High blood pressure is a risk factor for bruising." Goldburt cites this very thing as "a big part of why I wanted to do this. When a lot of people come in for Botox, they're very tense and nervous and don't know what to expect. People have this 'white coat syndrome,' where they see a doctor in the office and their blood pressure skyrockets. In their own home, in their own domain, they will feel a lot more relaxed. It's more comfortable if it's on the patient's terms."

Tech-meets-beauty Boomer might seem like a breakthrough product, but it also recalls the once-common practice of doctors performing house calls. Would you try an app-delivered Botox session in your home? Or do you side with Kazin, who says, "It's a medical procedure, not a pizza"?