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What's the ideal age to start getting Botox if you want to get rid of wrinkles? Doctors weigh in

The answer partially depends on whether you're looking to prevent lines or reduce the ones you already have.



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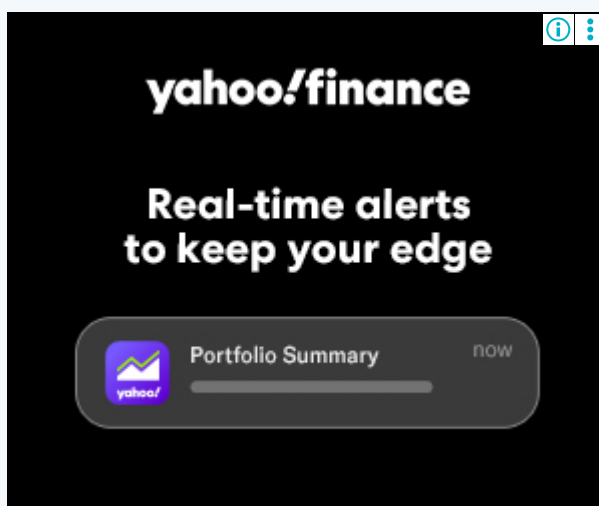
I decided to start Botox in my late 20s, but there's no magical age that's right for everyone, experts say. (Fenton Roman via Getty Images) [...More](#)

I started getting Botox when I was 28. Several friends and family members told me I was too young, but as someone who adored tanning beds during high school, didn't understand the importance of SPF until my mid-20s and has a very expressive face, fine lines were already forming. Recently, some of my friends started chatting about the topic. At age 33, most felt they were still too young and said they wanted to wait until they were in their 40s. So, I had to know: What's the right age to start getting Botox?

Of course, no one *needs* Botox. However, if you're interested in the injections and [preventing deep-set wrinkles](#) is important to you, I've got the scoop. I spoke to three doctors, and they all agreed that when you start is totally dependent on your skin. However, the *most common* age range for starting Botox is in the late 20s to 30s.

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"The 30s is one of the most common age ranges to start softening visible fine lines and stopping deeper wrinkles from forming," says [Dr. Robert Swarcz](#), a double board-certified oculofacial plastic surgeon and facial aesthetics specialist in New York City. "Getting Botox in your 40s usually addresses smoothing out already-formed deeper expression lines and refreshes the face. But of course, every person's skin is different, so there isn't one standard age

for everyone."

[Dr. Michele Green](#), a board-certified NYC cosmetic dermatologist, adds that a good time to start is when you notice the "first signs of lines starting to appear" — particularly any small, static lines that don't go away when you relax your face. She notes that for some people, this may be as early as their 20s. "That early static line is generally the clinical cue that preventive treatment offers the most, since the goal is to intervene before the crease becomes permanent."

She notes that your skin type, sun exposure history and strength of your facial muscles "all influence how early those first static lines might appear," which is why there's no set age for starting.

What is Botox and how does it work?

[Botox](#) is a brand name for a Botulinum toxin. (It's like calling a tissue a Kleenex or a bandage a Band-Aid.) Similar brands include [Xeomin](#), [Dysport](#), [Jeuveau](#) and [Daxxify](#). They're considered neuromodulators, and they're injected into facial muscles to reduce movement. They work by relaxing the muscles in your face that create expression lines. In other words, the muscles that let you frown, squint or look surprised? Botox takes them down a notch.

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This is important to understand because "when you make repetitive facial expressions, the skin folds over the same place over time and loses collagen and elastin in that area, leading to wrinkle formation," says [Dr. Teresa Song](#), a board-certified dermatologist at Marmur Medical in NYC. So by using Botox to relax those muscles that create expression lines, like crow's feet or those pesky

lines between your brows, you won't etch them deeper into your skin.

Is there such a thing as preventative Botox?

Yes, Botox can be used for preventing deep-set wrinkles. "When we start earlier, before those lines are deeply set, we're essentially reducing the wear and tear on the skin," Schwarcz says.

Preventative Botox is when you start treatment before any wrinkles have the chance to *really* set in, and it usually involves a lower dosage injected every three to four months. "As the muscles 'learn' to relax and patients maintain results, we can sometimes stretch the interval longer," Schwarcz explains, adding that "patients who start earlier often find that they need less product over time and can delay, or even reduce the extent of, more invasive procedures later on."

Is 'baby Botox' the same thing as preventative Botox?

Perhaps you've heard of "baby Botox"? It's what people often call it when they get a lower dosage, or for those who want a lighter treatment so they can still maintain natural facial expressions (like lifting their eyebrows), explains Song. "This means that patients who have deeper wrinkles can still choose to have a lower dosage of neuromodulators for treatment, making baby Botox not always the same as preventive Botox," she says.

Should you still get Botox if you already have deep-set wrinkles?

If you want to get Botox later in life, don't worry — you're not too late! However, Green says that "once wrinkles progress from dynamic lines to deep, static folds, Botox alone typically isn't enough because it addresses muscle movement rather than lost volume or damaged skin texture."

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This is when you may want to combine Botox with hyaluronic-based dermal fillers and resurfacing treatments, she explains. "A thoughtfully placed dermal filler can restore lost volume in areas such as the nasolabial folds and cheeks, while resurfacing treatments target surface changes that Botox and fillers cannot correct on their own."

Some examples of resurfacing treatments that Schwarcz recommends include [Morpheus8](#) microneedling to tighten skin over time or [CO2 laser treatments](#) to improve skin texture and reduce pigmentation and fine lines. Song recommends noninvasive skin tightening treatments like [Ultherapy](#), [Sofwave](#) and [Thermage Skin Tightening](#) to help promote collagen formation and smooth the skin. Green adds that [Fraxel Dual](#), [Clear & Brilliant](#) and [Aquagold Fine Touch](#) treatments are great for reducing fine lines and improving skin texture, and says [Sculptra](#), a biostimulator that gradually triggers the body's own collagen production, is a good option for patients looking for full-face rejuvenation versus targeting a single area.

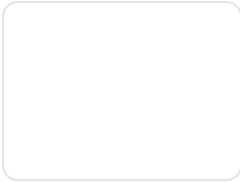
"There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach, and it will depend on the skin quality and volume loss to determine which combination therapy can work best," Song says.

Your skin care routine is just as important

Skin care plays a big role in any [anti-aging regimen](#), whether or not you're getting Botox. But like in-office treatments, your routine will look a little different depending on whether you're looking to prevent wrinkles or already have some — it's prevention vs. correction. Here are the types of products you should have in your routine, according to the experts:

Sunscreen

This should be obvious! "Daily SPF is one of the most important parts of the routine, as UV exposure accelerates collagen breakdown and contributes to wrinkle formation," Song says. No matter what stage your skin is at, you should [wear sunscreen](#) and reapply it regularly.

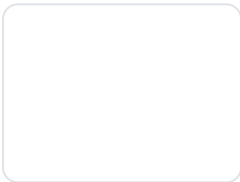


EltaMD UV Clear Face Sunscreen with
Zinc Oxide

\$45 at Amazon

Retinoids

Song calls retinoids the "gold standard" in anti-aging skin care because they actively stimulate collagen production, improve cell turnover and suppress the breakdown of collagen. You can get them from your dermatologist, or Green says "for those who find prescription retinoids too irritating, over-the-counter [retinol](#) is a reasonable and well-studied alternative."



Differin Acne Treatment Gel Retinoid
Treatment

\$10 at Amazon

Hyaluronic acid

"[Hyaluronic acid](#) is another ingredient worth prioritizing, particularly for patients whose wrinkles are made more visible by dehydrated, deflated-looking skin," says Green. It works by drawing in and holding water in the skin, so it can plump the appearance of fine lines. But you can also use it as a hydrating layer beneath a retinoid to offset some of the dryness one may cause.



La Roche-Posay Hyalu B5 Hyaluronic Acid
Serum

\$40 at Amazon

Vitamin C

Antioxidants, particularly [vitamin C](#) or L-ascorbic acid, have been shown to stimulate collagen, reduce pigmentation and stop harmful, unstable oxygen molecules from the sun's rays from damaging your skin cells.

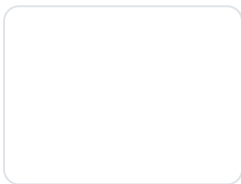


Timeless Skin Care Vitamin C Serum

\$26 at Amazon

Topical peptides

"[Peptides](#) act as a signaling molecule that encourages the skin to behave as if it needs repair and rebuilding, rather than directly inhibiting the enzymes that break down collagen," Green shares. That means that peptides can significantly decrease lines and wrinkles, and they get bonus points for a low risk of skin irritation.



The Ordinary Multi-Peptide Anti-Aging Serum

\$26 at Amazon

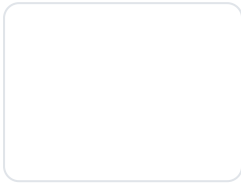
Red-light therapy

Green says that [at-home LED masks](#) have been a "game changer" for many of her patients, and they're a good complement to Botox. They can stimulate collagen, boost cellular energy, reduce inflammation and improve fine lines and skin elasticity. Of course, you can get a stronger red-light treatment at your doctor's office, but the at-home masks may provide results with regular use. "LED lights are great adjunctive options at home to maintain in-office results," Song confirms. "LED lights, specifically in the red (630-630 nanometers) and near-infrared (830-850 nanometers) wavelengths, have been shown to decrease wrinkles."

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However, many red-light therapy devices aren't regulated, so check their wavelengths, see if they're FDA-approved or talk to your doctor before investing in one.



Shark CryoGlow LED Face Mask

\$349 at Amazon

The bottom line

If you want to get Botox, the age when you start totally depends on your skin and your goals, but getting the ball rolling earlier with preventative treatments may provide maximum benefits. You can book a consultation with a dermatologist or plastic surgeon to learn what a personalized treatment would look like for you.

Meet our experts

- [Michele Green](#), MD, board-certified cosmetic dermatologist in NYC
- [Robert Schwarcz](#), MD, double board-certified oculofacial plastic surgeon and facial aesthetics specialist in NYC
- [Teresa Song](#), MD, board-certified dermatologist at [Marmur Medical](#) in NYC

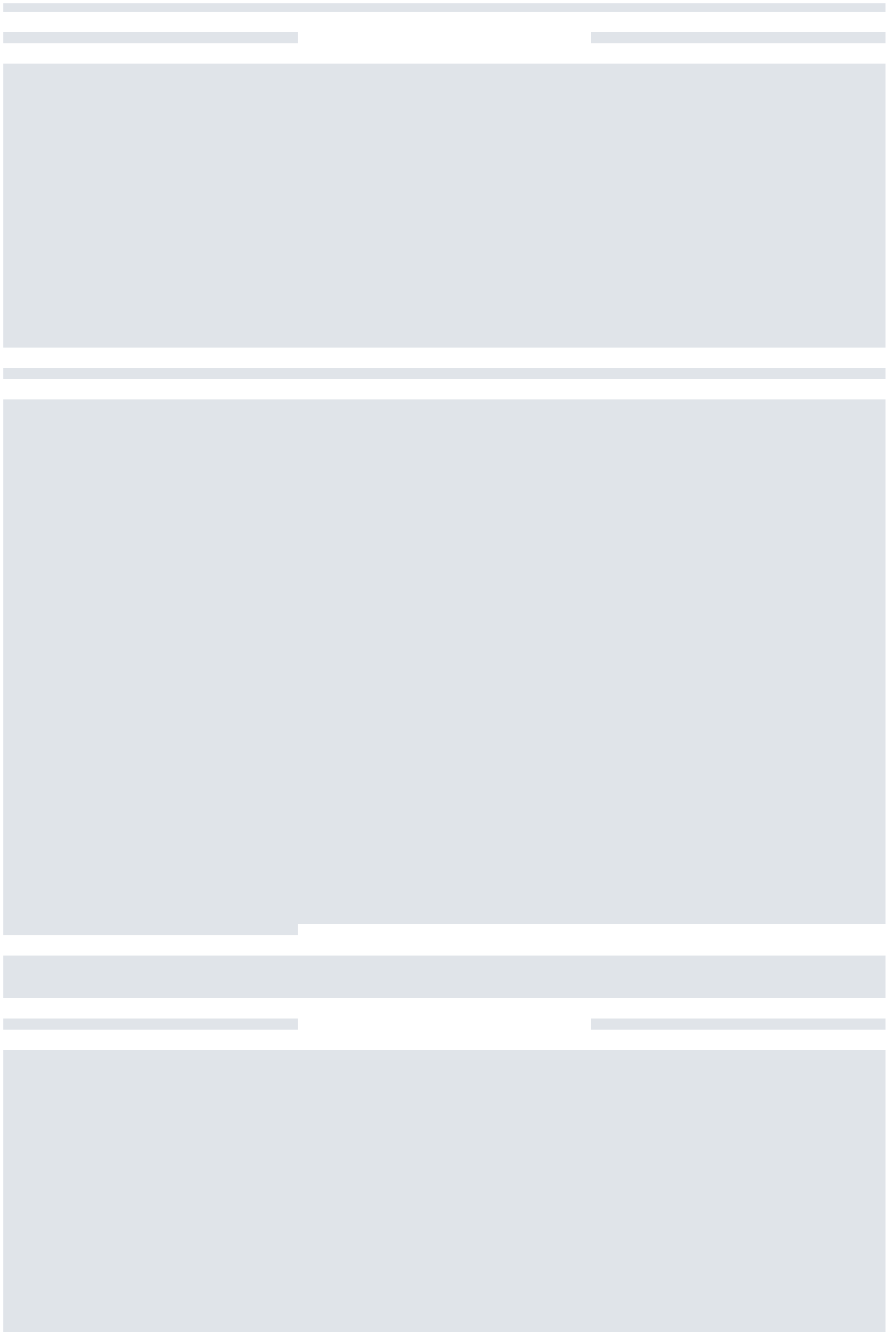
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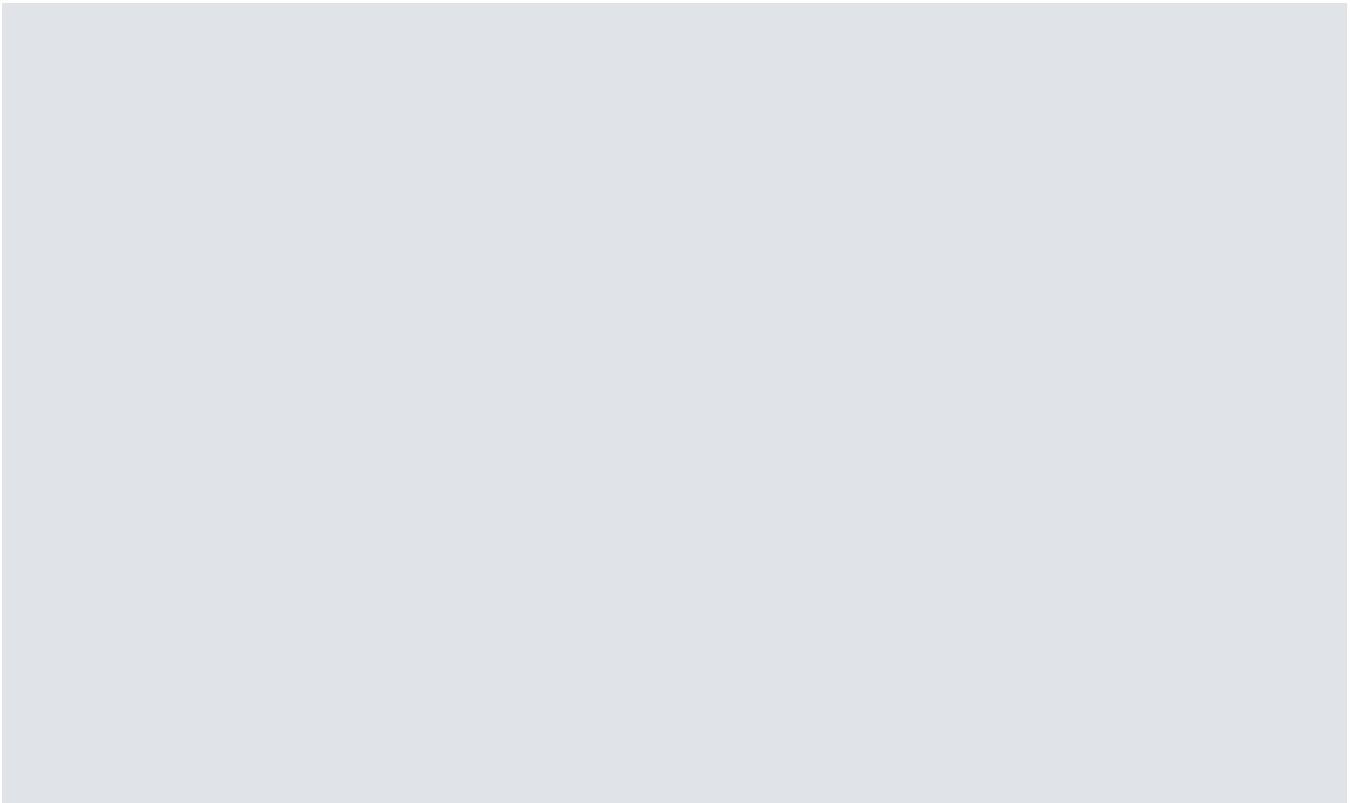
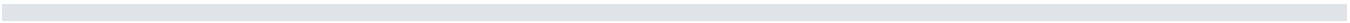
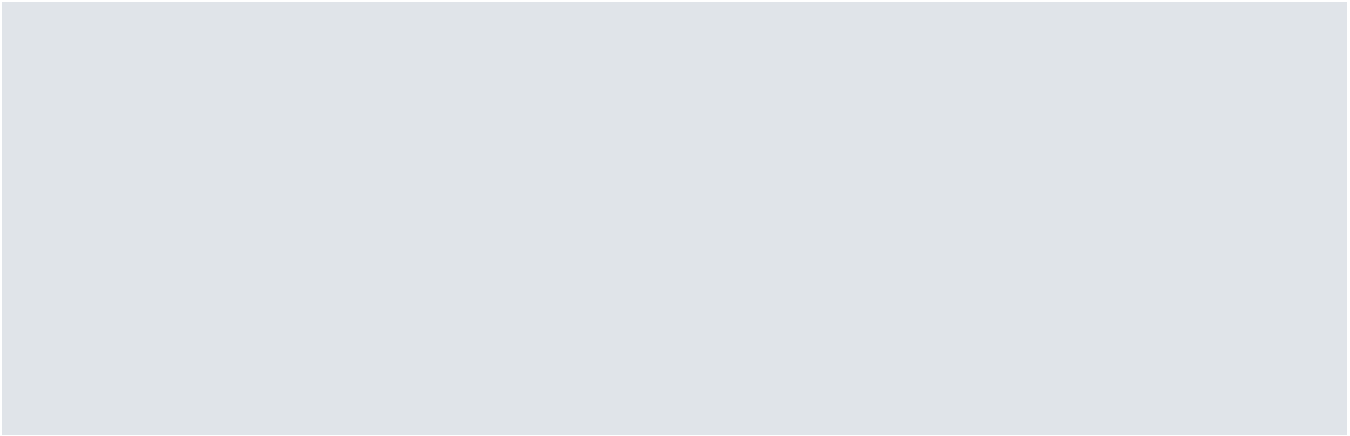
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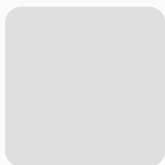
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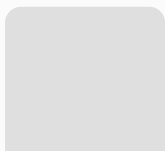
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