

# Botulism

(Clostridium botulinum)

## What is Botulism?

- Botulism is an illness caused by spores that can be produced by the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*.
- This germ is common and doesn't always make you sick, but under some conditions the spores can create toxins within some food.
- Conditions in which spores can create toxins:
  - low oxygen
  - low sugar
  - low acid
  - low salt

## Who can get Botulism?

Anyone can get botulism, but some groups of people can be more at risk for becoming ill from botulism.

- people who drink home-made alcohol
- people who eat home-canned or home-processed food
- babies who have consumed honey
- people who get large doses of cosmetic botulism toxin (Botox) injections
- people who inject certain drugs

## Symptoms of Botulism:

Symptom of this illness can begin around 18 to 36 hours after eating contaminated food.

### Symptoms may include:

### Symptoms in infants may include:

- vomiting
- nausea
- stomach pain/cramping
- diarrhea
- constipation
- poor feeding
- drooping eyelids/slow reaction
- weak cry
- difficulty breathing
- less facial expression



## What to do if you have symptoms:



Contact your health provider if you have concerns or questions about your health, especially if you are or may be pregnant. They may ask you to submit a sample or run tests to see if you have Botulism.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have other medical conditions or a weakened immune system (such as HIV infection or from chemotherapy treatment) because you may be more likely to become severely ill.

## How to decrease your chance of getting Botulism:

Many times, the illness can be avoided and happen after eating food that has been home-canned, preserved or fermented that have been canned incorrectly.

### common sources (canned): (not canned):

- asparagus
- green beans
- beets
- corn
- potatoes
- cheese sauce
- tomatoes
- chopped garlic in oil
- carrot juice
- baked potatoes in foil

Do not feed honey to infants under the age of 1 year old.

## Treatment:



If you are having intestinal symptoms, you should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Your doctor may prescribe an antitoxin medication, which can prevent further damage. If you have a severe illness, you may need to recover in the hospital.

Follow what your provider tells you to do and take all pills as directed.