

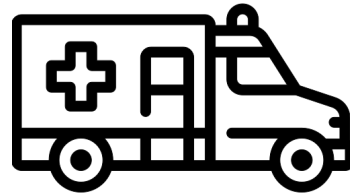
# Botulism

## Fact Sheet

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Botulism is a serious, sometimes fatal illness caused by botulinum nerve toxin. This toxin (poison) is made by a kind of bacteria.



Botulism is always considered a medical emergency. It can cause death by paralyzing the muscles used to breathe.

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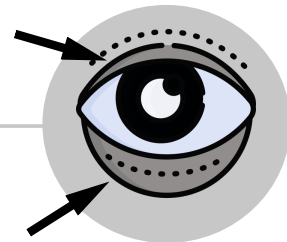
## Common Signs and Symptoms



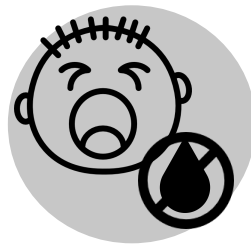
Double/Blurred Vision



Slurred Speech



Drooping Eyelids



Dry Mouth



Trouble Swallowing



Muscle Weakness

These are all symptoms of the muscle paralysis caused by the toxin. Infants with botulism can appear sleepy, feed poorly, have constipation, and have a weak cry. Symptoms usually appear within 18 to 36 hours, but range from six hours to ten days after exposure. Without treatment, botulism can lead to paralysis of the arms, legs, trunk, and muscles used for breathing. This can lead to death.

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Seek medical attention immediately if you have an infected wound or think you have botulism. Treatment usually requires intensive care in the hospital. Botulism can be treated with an antitoxin if identified quickly.

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# Spread of Botulism

People can get botulism from:



Eating or drinking something contaminated with the toxin



An accidental overdose of the toxin from medical or cosmetic purposes

You can also get wound botulism when a wound is infected with the bacteria that makes the toxin. People who inject drugs are at increased risk of wound botulism. Botulism cannot be spread from one person to another.

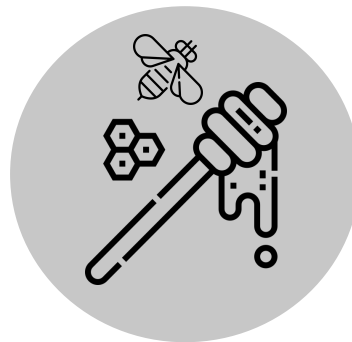
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## Foods Most Often Associated With Botulism



Home-Canned Food Such as:

- Asparagus
- Green Beans
- Beets
- Corn



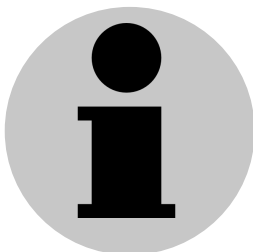
Honey (Specifically in Babies)

Botulism is most often associated with home-canned low-acid foods. However, botulism can occur in unusual sources such as chopped garlic in oil and improperly handled baked potatoes. Honey can contain the botulism bacteria, so children less than 12 months old should not be fed honey.

Botulism can be prevented through careful food-handling practices. Practice safe home canning and food preservation techniques.

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## For More Information



Visit [www.cdc.gov/botulism](http://www.cdc.gov/botulism)

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.