

FACT SHEET

CLOSTRIDIUM BOTULINUM

Foodborne botulism is caused by eating foods that contain the botulinum toxin produced by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum. Foodborne botulism can be fatal and is a public health emergency.

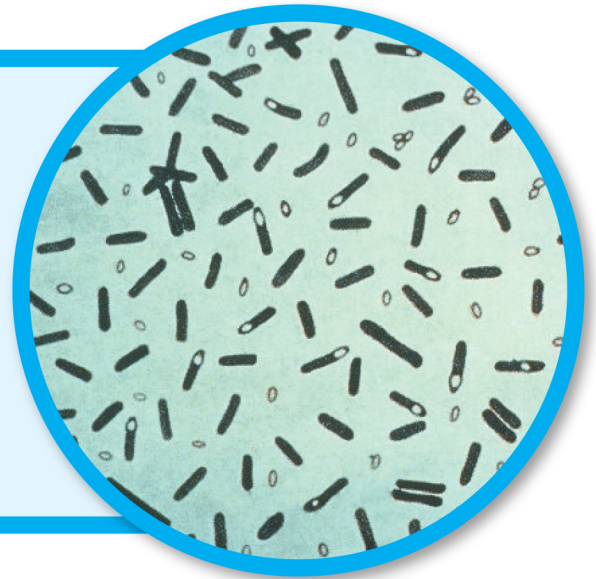
SOURCES: Improperly canned foods (especially home-canned vegetables), fermented fish, baked potatoes in aluminum foil

INCUBATION PERIOD: 12-72 hours

SYMPTOMS: Vomiting, diarrhea, blurred vision, double vision, difficulty in swallowing, slurred speech, muscle weakness

DURATION: Variable

WHAT DO I DO?: Botulism is a medical emergency. If you have symptoms of botulism, contact your doctor immediately. Physicians may try to remove contaminated food still in the gut by inducing vomiting or by using enemas.



Simple food handling practices can help prevent *Clostridium Botulinum* infections:

- Foodborne botulism, most often from home-canned foods with low acid content, such as asparagus, green beans, beets and corn, can be prevented by carefully following proper canning methods.
- The botulinum toxin is destroyed by high temperatures (persons who eat home-canned foods should consider boiling the food for 10 minutes before eating it to ensure safety).
- Proper handling of food items (e.g., canned cheese sauce, chile peppers, tomatoes, carrot juice) during manufacture, at retail, or by consumers can help prevent botulism.
- Oils infused with garlic or herbs should be refrigerated.
- Potatoes which have been baked while wrapped in aluminum foil should be kept hot until served or refrigerated.
- Honey can contain the bacteria that causes infant botulism, so children less than 12 months old should not be fed honey.



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