

which can contribute to muscle spasms. Parents are encouraged to stay with the child to offer security and support. They also need support, information, and reassurance from the nurse.

## Botulism

Botulism is an acute flaccid paralysis caused by the preformed toxin produced by the anaerobic bacillus *Clostridium botulinum*. In classic, or foodborne botulism, the most common source of the toxin is a contaminated food source. The disease has a wide variation in severity, from constipation to progressive sequential loss of neurologic function and respiratory failure. The most common source of the toxin is improperly sterilized home-canned foods. CNS symptoms appear abruptly approximately 12 to 36 hours after ingestion of contaminated food and may or may not be preceded by acute digestive disturbance (Box 30-12).

### **Box 30-12**

## **Clinical Manifestations of Botulism**

### **General Signs**

Weakness

Dizziness

Headache

Difficulty talking and speaking

Diplopia

Vomiting

Progressive, life-threatening respiratory paralysis

### **Infant Botulism\***

Constipation (a common symptom)