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Botulism

Botulism is a rare but serious illness. The cause is a toxin (poison) made by a bacterium called *Clostridium botulinum*. It occurs naturally in soil.

There are several kinds of botulism. Foodborne [<https://medlineplus.gov/foodborneillness.html>] botulism comes from eating foods contaminated with the toxin. Wound botulism happens when a wound infected with the bacteria makes the toxin. It is more common in heroin users. Infant botulism happens when a baby consumes the spores of the bacteria from soil or honey. All forms can be deadly and are medical emergencies.

Symptoms include double or blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. Treatment may include antitoxins, intensive medical care, or surgery of infected wounds.

To prevent botulism:

- Be very careful when canning foods at home
- Do not let babies eat honey
- Get prompt medical care for infected wounds

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Start Here

- About Botulism [<https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Botulism [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/botulism/symptoms-causes/syc-20370262?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/botulism/symptoms-causes/syc-20370262?p=1>]

Symptoms

- Symptoms of Botulism [<https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/signs-symptoms/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)


Related Issues

- Home-Canned Foods [<https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/prevention/home-canned-foods.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Statistics and Research

- National Botulism Surveillance [<https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/php/national-botulism-surveillance/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Botulism [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Botulism%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Foodborne Botulism Outbreak After Consumption of Home-Canned Cactus (Nopales) - Fresno... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40608564>]
- Article: Autonomic Dysfunction and Blood Pressure Variability in Botulinum Intoxication: A Prospective... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40278703>]
- Article: Public knowledge of food poisoning, risk perception and food safety practices... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40228247>]
- Botulism -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Botulism%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Food and Drug Administration [<https://www.fda.gov/>]
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Botulism [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/infections/Pages/Botulism.aspx>]
(American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/conditions/infections/paginas/botulism.aspx>]
- Infant Botulism (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/botulism.html>] (Nemours Foundation)

Patient Handouts

- Botulism [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000598.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000598.htm>]
- Infant botulism [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001384.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001384.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Botulism [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000598.htm>]

Infant botulism [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001384.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Biodefense and Bioterrorism [<https://medlineplus.gov/biodefenseandbioterrorism.html>]

Botox [<https://medlineplus.gov/botox.html>]

Food Safety [<https://medlineplus.gov/foodsafety.html>]

Foodborne Illness [<https://medlineplus.gov/foodborneillness.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Botulism* is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>]

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