



Home → Health Topics → Botulism

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/botulism.html>

## 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>] NIH (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/>] NIH

## 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>]

## Related Health Topics

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

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

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

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

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies.

MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html)

[<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html)

[<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>].

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)