



What is botulism?

- Rare but serious illness caused by a toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*
 - Foodborne Botulism – eating foods containing botulinum toxin
 - Wound Botulism – wound becomes infected with *C. botulinum* bacteria
 - Infant Botulism – eating spores of *C. botulinum* bacteria

What are symptoms that could occur?

- Double or blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Difficulty swallowing
- Ill infants appear sleepy, eat poorly, are constipated, poor muscle tone, and a very weak cry
- Drooping eyelids
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness

How is it spread?

- Eating contaminated foods that contain the bacteria or toxin
- Symptoms can present 12 – 36 hours after eating contaminated food, reported as early as 6 hours and as late as 10 days

How is it treated?

- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and/or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) house the botulism anti-toxin
- Some patients may need to be on a ventilator for weeks with medical care or may have shortness of breath for years after exposure

How can botulism be prevented?

- Avoid feeding honey to infants less than 12 months, since it may contain spores of *C. botulinum* bacteria
- Seek medical care for infected wounds
- When home canning, follow strict hygiene procedures to reduce contamination of food
 - High temperatures destroy botulinum toxin
 - Consider boiling the food for 10 minutes before eating to ensure safety

Should facilities do special cleaning?

- Special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017