



Botulism

The disease

Botulism is a muscle-paralyzing disease caused by a nerve toxin that is made by the bacteria, *Clostridium botulinum* (*C. botulinum*).

3 most common type that affect humans

- Foodborne Botulism: most commonly caused by eating the toxin and leads to illness within a 12-36 hours.
- Intestinal (Infant botulism): occurs in a small number of susceptible infants and adults each year who have the *C. botulinum* in their intestinal tract.
- Wound botulism: occurs when wounds are infected with *C. botulinum* that secretes the toxin.

Importance: Foodborne Botulism is a public health emergency because it could indicate that the food is still available to other people

Cause

- Eating food that was improperly stored.
- Eating canned goods that have a container that is bulging.
- Eating home canned goods that have a top that did not seal.
- Eating foods that are not heated or not heated thoroughly before eating.

Symptoms

- Double vision
- Blurred vision
- Drooping eyelids
- Slurred speech
- Difficulty swallowing
- Dry mouth
- Paralysis of breathing
- Muscle weakness that starts in the shoulders and moves down the body

The risk

Botulism can occur in all age groups. Botulism is not spread person-to-person. Botulism can result in death due to respiratory failure. However, in the past 50 years the number of patients with botulism who die has fallen from about 50% to 8%.

Prevention

The toxin is destroyed by heating foods for five minutes at temperatures of 185 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Treatment

Early diagnosis and treatment is paramount.