

## Botulism

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### What is Botulism?

Botulism is a rare but serious paralytic illness caused by a nerve agent produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*

### Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms can appear from 18-36 hours after foodborne exposure, but can appear as early 6 hours or as late as 10 days

- Double vision and blurred vision
- Drooping eyelids
- Slurred speech
- Difficulty swallowing
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness

If untreated, symptoms can progress to paralysis of the arms, legs, trunk and respiratory muscles

### Transmission (How it spreads)

Botulism is usually spread through contaminated foods, but can infect open wounds on the skin

### Diagnosis and Treatment

Patient history and physical examination typically lead to a diagnosis

If recognized quickly, an antitoxin can be administered, if left untreated supportive treatment is available

### Prevention:

#### Who is at Risk?

Everyone; higher risk groups include:

- People who inject drugs such as heroin
- People who consume homemade alcohols
- People who consume home-canned or home-fermented foods
- People who get botulinum toxin injections for cosmetic reasons

If you have symptoms, call your healthcare provider

Report cases to the Riley County Health Department by calling the Disease Investigation  
Line: 785-317-0474

Botulism is a reportable disease in the state of Kansas. All cases must be reported to  
KDHE via the Epi Hotline: 877-427-7317