

# Botulism

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BOTULISM PLEASE VISIT: <https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/about/index.html>

## What is botulism?

Botulism is a rare but serious illness caused by the botulinum toxin. The toxin attacks the nervous system, causing muscle paralysis, difficulty breathing, and in some cases death.

## How do people get botulism?

- Eating foods contaminated by the botulinum toxin.
- When wounds are infected by the bacterial spores that create botulinum.
- When bacterial spores enter the intestines of infants or adults and produce botulinum.
- When too much botulinum toxin (Botox) is injected for cosmetic reasons.

## What are the signs of botulism?

### General symptoms:

- Difficulty swallowing
- Muscle weakness
- Changes in vision
- Drooping eyelids
- Slurred speech
- Difficulty breathing

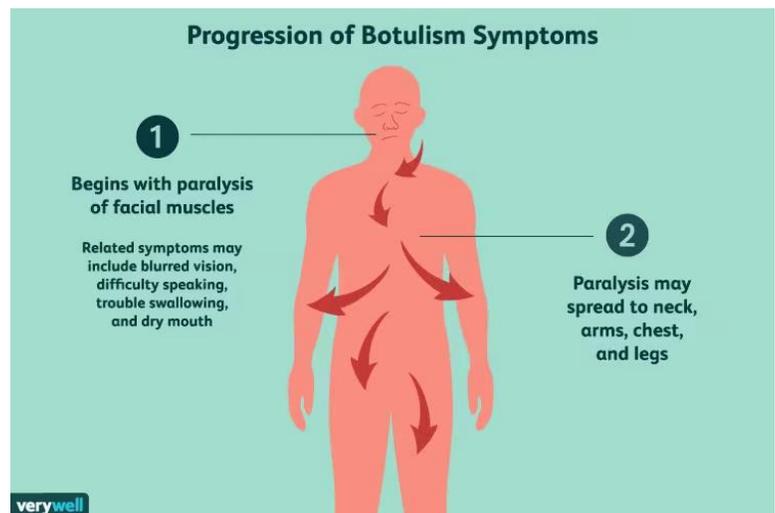
### Symptoms from foodborne botulism:

- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea

### Signs and symptoms in infants:

- Constipation
- Poor feeding
- Drooping eyelids
- Pupils that are slow to react to light

- Less expressive than normal
- Weak cry that sounds different than normal



Credit: Verywell / Gary Ferster

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-botulism-4142153>

## How to prevent botulism:

• Avoid improperly canned, preserved, or fermented foods. When preparing these foods at home, follow safety guidelines. • Don't give honey to infants younger than 12 months. • Do not consume food that has been recalled. • Keep wounds clean and get immediate medical care if wounds appear infected. • Ensure your cosmetic provider follows FDA guidelines before injecting Botox.

## Treatment for botulism:

- Antitoxin is used to prevent botulism from causing more harm, but it does not reverse damage that has already been caused by the toxin.
- A ventilatory may be used for severe cases to assist with breathing difficulties.
- Surgery may be needed to remove the source of bacteria from wound botulism.
- Antibiotics may be prescribed.