

Botulism Outbreak Response Guide

Botulism is a serious, sometimes fatal illness caused by the *botulinum* nerve toxin. This toxin is made by the spore-forming bacteria, *Clostridium botulinum*, which causes illness. The toxin produced by the bacteria can cause death by paralyzing the muscles used for breathing.



What are common signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms usually start 18 to 36 hours after exposure to the bacteria and after-effects can last weeks, months, or years. Do not return to work until you are symptom-free for 24-72 hours without use of medications.



Diarrhea



Nausea & vomiting



Double/blurred vision & drooping eyelids



Difficulty breathing & swallowing



Muscle weakness

How can *Botulism* spread in the kitchen?



Foods from unapproved sources



Improper temperatures



Improper fermentation & curing of foods. Approved HACCP plan with SNHD required



Not washing hands with soap & hot water for 10-20 seconds

What foods are commonly associated with *Botulism*?



Home-canned foods



Fresh garlic in oil



Honey



Fermented fish



Any foods an infected food handler touched

What to do if you think your restaurant has an outbreak?



Notify SNHD at outbreakresponse@snhd.org



Do not work while sick. Screen workers for illness before they clock in & send sick employees home immediately.



Track & log employee illness, including vomiting & diarrheal incidents.



Deep clean & disinfect the kitchen & high-touch surfaces including door handles & restrooms.



Consider reducing menu or temporarily closing until the source of the illnesses is eliminated.