

FactSheet

Para Su Información

Botulism, Infant

What is infant botulism?

Infant botulism is a disease caused by a toxin produced when the intestines of very young children are infected with the bacterium, *Clostridium botulinum*.

Who gets infant botulism?

Children who get infant botulism are generally younger than six months of age. The spores of *Clostridium botulinum* are common in soil, and can also be found in a variety of foods and in dust. Infant botulism has been associated with feeding contaminated honey (and rarely corn syrup) to infants.

How is infant botulism spread?

Infant botulism is not contagious, and person-to-person transmission is not known to occur. To become infected, an infant must eat the bacterial spores that then multiply and produce the toxin in the digestive tract.

What are the symptoms of infant botulism?

The initial symptoms of infant botulism are constipation and poor feeding, followed by listlessness and weakness that may be severe enough to make the baby appear "floppy."

How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period for infant botulism is unknown.

What is the treatment for infant botulism?

Hospital care is necessary. Neither antibiotics nor antitoxin have proven beneficial in treating infant botulism and may even make the illness worse. Most infants recover following supportive care in a hospital.

What happens if infant botulism is not treated?

Infant botulism may result in death.

How can botulism be prevented?

Identified sources of infant botulism, such as honey, should not be fed to infants.

Where can I get more information?

Contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District, Office of Epidemiology at (702) 759-1300.



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