



MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

BOTULISM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What is botulism?

- Botulism is a disease caused by the poison released from the bacterium Clostridium botulinum.
- There are three types of the disease: food borne botulism, wound botulism, and infant botulism.
- All three types are considered serious medical conditions and should be treated by a physician as soon as possible.
- In the event of a bioterrorist attack involving botulism, the toxin will most likely be released as an aerosol or used to contaminate foods.

Can I get botulism from an infected person?

You cannot get botulism from an infected person.

How will I know if I was exposed to the germ?

- It will depend on how the germ is released, where it was released, and where you were in relation to the release site.
- The further away you were from the release site the less likely it will be that you were exposed.

How soon will symptoms develop (incubation period)?

- Symptoms may start as soon as 12-36 hours or as long as a couple of days after exposure to the toxin.
- The time will depend on the dose that is received.

What are the symptoms of infection?

If you are exposed to the toxin by breathing or eating contaminated foods, you may develop the following symptoms:

- blurred or double vision
- difficulty breathing
- dry mouth
- possibly muscle paralysis
- difficulty swallowing



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How is the infection treated?

- If you have the infection, your health care provider (doctor or nurse) may treat you with an antitoxin.
- You will also be closely monitored to make sure your symptoms do not get worse, and to properly take care of you if your symptoms do get worse.

How is the infection prevented?

- If the Macomb County Health Department determines that you were exposed to the germ, you will be offered an anti-toxin.
- You will also be closely monitored to ensure that you do not develop symptoms of the infection.

What should I do if I DO NOT have symptoms?

- If you do not have symptoms of the infection, you should continue with your routine daily activities.
- Please DO NOT go to the hospital emergency room unless you have any of the symptoms listed on page 1 and believe that you were exposed to the botulism toxin.

How can I get health advisories or alerts?

- In the event of a public health threat or emergency, the Macomb County Health Department will make frequent public announcements.
- Listen to local radio and TV for more information. You may also visit <http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth> or call 586-466-7923 for instructions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Macomb County Health Department
 Emergency Preparedness Program
 43525 Elizabeth Road
 Mount Clemens, MI 48043
 Phone: 586-469-5235
 Fax: 586-469-5885

<http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth>

MORE BOTULISM INFORMATION

- Botulism: Michigan Prepares (MDCH/OPHP) http://michigan.gov/michiganprepares/0,1607,7-232-42666_42882_42953-150586-,00.html
- Botulism (CDC) <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/botulism/>
- Botulism Fact Sheet (NIAID) <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/healthscience/healthtopics/botulism/index.htm>
- Or call the CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-888-232-6348 (TTY).