

**Insert agency name**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Insert date)

For information, contact:  
(Insert contact information)

## Headline

(Insert information about the event)

Local authorities believe that people who were at (insert location) on (insert date and time) may have been exposed to the a foodborne bacteria that causes botulism. Public Health and other local authorities are investigating this incident.

Botulism is a muscle-paralyzing disease caused by a toxin made by a bacterium called *Clostridium botulinum*. Foodborne botulism occurs when a person ingests pre-formed toxin that leads to illness within a few hours to days. Symptoms begin within 6 hours to 2 weeks (most commonly between 12 and 36 hours) after eating toxin-containing food. Symptoms of botulism include double vision, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, muscle weakness that always descends through the body: first shoulders are affected, then upper arms, lower arms, thighs, calves, etc. Paralysis of breathing muscles can cause a person to stop breathing and die, unless assistance with breathing (mechanical ventilation) is provided.

Botulism is not spread from one person to another. Foodborne botulism can occur in all age groups.

There is treatment. A supply of antitoxin against botulism is maintained by CDC. The antitoxin is effective in reducing the severity of symptoms if administered early in the course of the disease. Most patients eventually recover after weeks to months of supportive care.

If you believe you have been exposed, or if you have any of the symptoms associated with foodborne botulism, please see a healthcare provider immediately.

Public Health may open a mass medication dispensing site. That will be determined in the coming days, and the public will be informed as soon as that decision is made. Please stay tuned to local radio and TV stations for more information.