

# Botulism

### Foodborne

Meets Clinical Description?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → History of eating the same food as a laboratory confirmed case, **OR** (+) detection of *C. botulinum* toxin in serum, stool, or food, **OR** (+) culture for toxin producing *C. botulinum* from stool?

No → Epidemiologically linked to a food source?

Yes → **CONFIRMED**

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → **PROBABLE**

**Clinical Description:**  
An illness of variable severity. Common symptoms are diplopia, blurred vision, and bulbar weakness. Symmetric paralysis may progress rapidly.

### Infant

Meets Clinical Description?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → (+) *C. botulinum* toxin detected in serum or stool **OR** toxin producing *C. botulinum* identified by culture from stool?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → **CONFIRMED**

**Clinical Description:**  
An illness of infants, characterized by constipation, poor feeding, and "failure to thrive" that may be followed by progressive weakness, impaired respiration, and death.

### Wound

Meets Clinical Description?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → Suspected exposure to contaminated food?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → Foodborne

History of fresh, contaminated wound <2 weeks before symptoms, **OR** of injection drug use within 2 weeks before onset of symptoms?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → (+) *C. Botulinum* toxin in serum **OR** (+) culture of toxin producing *C. botulinum* from wound?

No → **PROBABLE**

Yes → **CONFIRMED**

**Clinical Description:**  
An illness resulting from toxin produced by *Clostridium botulinum* that has infected a wound. Common symptoms are diplopia, blurred vision, and bulbar weakness. Symmetric paralysis may progress rapidly.

### Other

Meets Clinical Description?

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → History of ingestion of suspect food, **OR** wounds?

No → *C. Botulinum* toxin detected in any clinical specimen, **OR** *C. botulinum* toxin isolated by culture?

Yes → See other case definitions

No → **NOT A CASE**

Yes → **CONFIRMED**

**Clinical Description:**  
An illness of variable severity that occurs among persons greater than 1 year of age. Common symptoms are diplopia, blurred vision, and bulbar weakness. Symmetric paralysis may progress rapidly.