

Q & A from the CDC – July 2007

Questions and Answers

Related to the Outbreak of Botulism Associated with Canned Chili Sauce, July 2007

Did people get botulism from eating chili sauce?

Yes. As of July 18, 2007, four cases of botulism have been reported to the CDC from Indiana (2 cases) and Texas (2 cases). All four persons were reported to have consumed Castleberry's brand Hot Dog Chili Sauce the day before the illness began. Botulinum toxin was identified in leftover chili sauce collected from a patient's home.

Which brands of chili sauce have been linked to illness?

Castleberry's Hot Dog Chili Sauce
Castleberry's Austex Hot Dog Chili Sauce

Which brands of chili sauce have been recalled?

Castleberry's Hot Dog Chili Sauce (UPC 3030000101),
Austex Hot Dog Chili Sauce (UPC 3030099533),
Kroger Hot Dog Chili Sauce (UPC 1111083942)

Why have brands other than the ones known to have caused illness been recalled?

All the recalled brands are canned in the same plant. There is concern that other products manufactured at the same time could be contaminated. None of the recalled products should be consumed.

How did botulinum toxin get into chili sauce?

We do not yet know. OutbreakNet (the network of epidemiologists and other public health officials, facilitated by CDC, who investigate outbreaks of foodborne, waterborne, and other enteric illnesses nationwide) officials at CDC and in state and local health departments, FDA, and the marketing and manufacturing companies are working collaboratively to learn more about production of Castleberry's Hot Dog Chili Sauce and Castleberry's Austex Hot Dog Chili Sauce to determine how these products may have been contaminated.

I ate the recalled chili sauce. What should I do?

If you develop any signs or symptoms of botulism and have eaten the chili sauce that was recalled, you should seek medical attention immediately. Signs and symptoms of botulism include double vision, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. If untreated, the illness may progress from head to toe, with paralysis of the face, arms, breathing muscles, trunk, and legs. Symptoms generally begin 18 to 36 hours after eating a contaminated food, but they can occur as early as 6 hours or as late as 10 days. If your physician suspects botulism, he or she should contact local or state health officials, who will collect any leftover chili sauce and cans.

I ate chili sauce in the past 2 weeks, but I don't know the brand. What should I do?

If you are experiencing signs or symptoms of botulism, you should seek medical attention immediately. Signs and symptoms of botulism include double vision, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. If untreated, the illness may progress from head to toe, with paralysis of the face, arms, breathing muscles, trunk, and legs. Symptoms generally begin 18 to 36 hours after eating a contaminated food, but they can occur as early as 6 hours or as late as 10 days.

I ate chili sauce more than 2 weeks ago. What should I do?

If you have no signs or symptoms of botulism, you are very unlikely to develop botulism. You do not need to do anything.

Isn't botulism usually associated with home-canned foods?

Yes, most cases of botulism are caused by improperly prepared home-canned foods or traditional Alaskan Native foods. Commercially canned foods are generally very safe.

Links

US Food and Drug Administration – www.fda.gov

Botulism Information - http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/botulism_q.htm

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency – Environmental Health – www.bhsj.org

Local Phone numbers

Coldwater
517-279-9561

Hillsdale
517-437-7395

St. Joseph County
269-273-2161