

Important Health Notice

Information for Healthcare Professionals

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Two Confirmed Cases of Botulism in Toronto

Dear Colleagues:

Current Status

There are two confirmed cases of botulism in Toronto. Both patients are seriously ill with paralysis. Carrot juice found in the patients' homes tested positive for botulinum toxin.

There has been a product recall of the relevant products, but some still may be found in both retail settings and in individual homes. Public health units are taking steps to ensure the product is not offered for sale and the public is being advised through the media to not drink the product; to tightly close the container and then dispose in garbage; finally to wash hands after handling the container.

Onset of Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 12 to 36 hours after ingesting a contaminated food, but could appear as early as six hours or as long as 10 days after ingestion.

Symptoms

Symptoms of food borne botulism include nausea and/or vomiting, fatigue, dizziness, headache, double vision, dry throat, respiratory failure and paralysis. Death can occur in severe cases.

Treatment

Caregivers should use routine precautions.

Treatment may be initiated based on clinical presentation in those who have consumed an implicated food product.

Botulinum antitoxin is the treatment of choice. Contact the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care at 416 327-7392 (business hours) or 416 325-3001 / 1 800 268-6060 (after hours) to obtain.

The Botulism Reference Service at 613 957-0902 (business hours) or 613 296-1139 (after hours) can assist with the diagnosis, specimens to obtain, and appropriate transport.

Highlights:

- **Bolthouse Farms 100% Carrot Juice (450 ml., 1 litre); Earthbound Farm Organic Carrot Juice (450 ml., 1 litre); President's Choice Organics 100% Pure Carrot Juice (450 ml., 1 litre) have been recalled. Note: "best before" date is currently November 11, 2006.**
- **Symptoms of food borne botulism include nausea and/or vomiting, fatigue, dizziness, headache, double vision, dry throat, respiratory failure and paralysis. Death can occur in severe cases.**
- **Contact your local Public Health Unit with any suspected cases.**

Specimens could be product-related: container, label, manufacturer lot number, codes, "best before" dates. Specimens could also be patient-related: feces, gastric contents, blood serum.

Further information can be found in the Botulism Fact Sheet for Health Professionals:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/pub/diseases/botulism.html> and the Canadian Food Inspection

Agency website:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/corpaffr/recarapp/2006/20061007e.shtml>

Further Information

To locate your public health unit:

www.publichealthontario.ca

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care 416 325-3000

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