

Botulism Checklist for Public Health Nurses:

Signs and symptoms:

Establish the presence of **signs and symptoms** consistent with botulism:

- recent (1-10 days) consumption of traditionally prepared Native foods (seal, whale, salmon, beaver tail or paw, seal oil, etc.) or home canned foods (tomatoes, green beans)
- neurological: dry mouth, dysphagia, diplopia, blurry vision, bilateral dilated or unreactive pupils
- gastrointestinal/urinary: abdominal pain, diarrhea, intestinal ileus, nausea, vomiting, urinary retention
- muscular: dyspnea, fatigue, respiratory muscle paralysis, symmetrical skeletal weakness

(See: *Botulism in Alaska*. 2017. <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/siteassets/Pages/botulism/monograph.pdf>)

Report and identify suspected food source:

Call Section of Epidemiology (SOE) and **report any suspect botulism** cases immediately:

- **907-269-8000**, Monday - Friday, 8:00 - 5:00 or **1-800-478-0084**, after hours

Verify **food history** with patient(s) or others regarding what traditionally prepared Alaska Native foods were eaten. Advise about risks associated with consumption:

http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/Documents/pubs/mmm/MMM_Chapter_BotulismFoodborne.pdf

Interview any others who may have shared the meal. Review signs and symptoms of botulism; advise to D/C consumption of the suspected food(s) and seek immediate medical care if symptoms develop. Ensure contacts are safe and **monitored for 10 days**. Not everyone who consumes the same food may become ill with botulism. (Form: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/Botulism/BotulismMonitoringLog.pdf>)

Facilitate safe collection and shipment of suspect food samples. Alaska State Public Health Laboratory (ASPHL) 907-334-2100 can provide guidance on food collection and shipment. Seal all oil or liquid samples with duct tape. Address to **Special Pathogens, ASPHL** and include *Anchorage Lab Request Form*.

<http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Labs/Documents/LaboratoryTests.pdf>

Collaborate with SOE, Health Aide and hospitals to monitor contacts and treat (BAT[®]) subsequent cases.

REQUIRED specimens

Before administration of antitoxin, collect blood!

- 20 mls of blood (red top/serum separator, spin, do NOT aliquot), note collection time!**
- 20 mls of emesis** or gastric aspirates (prefer before antitoxin)



Think 20-20-10 before antitoxin!

- 10-50 grams of stool** (can be collected at any time).
- Collect **suspected food** if available, send to lab.
- Refrigerate samples**, not frozen.

***Epi Nurse will track all lab specimens** and request assistance to collect as needed.