# Botulism

## Sources
- **Infants**: Honey and products containing honey, such as infant pacifiers filled with or dipped in honey.
- **Infants, children and adults**: Improperly home-canned or preserved foods, including low-acid vegetables and fermented fish; improperly canned commercial foods; herb-infused oils, baked potatoes in aluminum foil, cheese sauce, bottled garlic.

## Incubation period
- **Infants**: 3-30 days
- **Children and adults**: 18-36 hours

## Symptoms
- **Infants**: Lethargy, poor feeding, constipation, weak crying, poor muscle tone (appear "floppy").
- **Children and adults**: Double vision, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, and muscle weakness.

## Duration of illness
Variable

## What to do
Botulism is a medical emergency. If you have symptoms of botulism, see your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

## Prevention
- Follow safe home canning instructions provided by the [National Center for Home Preservation](https://nchp.ars.usda.gov/). 
- Consult with your local [Cooperative Extension Service](https://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/). Most offices have a food safety specialist that can help home canning advice.
- Do not feed honey or give honey pacifiers to children younger than 12 months.

---

Date Last Reviewed March 22, 2021