## 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://www.ars.usda.gov/).  
• Consult with your local [Cooperative Extension Service](https://www.ceu.purdue.edu/). 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