

Health Alerts

Health Advisory #180 - Outbreak of Botulinum toxin Type A associated with bottled carrot juice - 09/18/2006

SUMMARY:

A commercial beverage has been confirmed as the cause of a cluster of three botulism cases in Georgia. The three patients had onset of symptoms on Friday, September 8th, after consuming a common meal that included commercially produced carrot juice on Thursday, September 7th. Two bottles of juice were consumed. All three patients drank from bottle #1; whether all three patients drank from bottle #2 is unknown. Botulinum toxin type A was identified in the serum and stool of all three patients by mouse bioassay. Subsequently, botulinum toxin type A was identified from carrot juice remaining in bottle #1 by mouse bioassay. Bottle #2 had been rinsed with water, and the test for toxin was negative. The label on the implicated bottle reads "Bolthouse Farms, Bakersfield, California, 100% carrot juice." The use by date is 09-18-06.

The investigation is ongoing. It is unknown whether the contaminated juice was subjected to time or temperature abuse that might have facilitated the growth of *Clostridium botulinum* spores, which can survive pasteurization. CDC has not been notified of any cases of suspected botulism since this cluster was reported on September 8. We encourage state and local officials to inquire specifically about consumption of carrot juice in the food history of suspect botulism cases.

CDC has distributed a notice of this outbreak to public health officials in all 50 states through the Foodborne Disease Listserv, reminding them about the contact numbers for CDC's Botulism Clinical Consultation and Antitoxin Release Service. The Georgia Department of Health issued an Epi-X alert to Georgia clinicians and local health officials, and a press release about this outbreak and the implicated food. We anticipate that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will be issuing a press release about this outbreak and advising consumers to properly refrigerate juices and follow other food safety guidelines for illness prevention.

If you identify a suspected botulism case, please contact the ECDOH at (716) 858-7697 (Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM) or (716) 898-4225 (evenings, weekends, and holidays) to report suspect cases or obtain additional information.

For more information on botulism visit this CDC website
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/botulism_g.htm