

Botulism Investigation Checklist for Local Health Departments

Local health department staff should follow these steps, not necessarily always in order, when investigating reports of botulism. For more detailed information refer to the Botulism Disease Chapter. Botulism is a Priority Level 1 disease and critical details should be entered into the Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS) **within 6 hours**.

- Ensure the case-patient has clinically-compatible illness based on NNDSS case definitions for infant, foodborne, or wound botulism, respectively.
- Inform the Foodborne and Waterborne Disease (FWD) Unit at cds.fwd.epi@doh.nj.gov immediately so that NJDOH can coordinate antitoxin authorization through CDC.
- Create a case and enter critical details (demographics, signs/symptoms, clinical status, and industry/occupation) into the CDRSS case.
- Enter relevant exposures [food history (especially consumption of home-canned food or homemade alcohol), history of injection drug use, or history of botulinum toxin injections for medical or cosmetic reasons].
- Notify the appropriate local health department and document in CDRSS if an establishment from another jurisdiction is identified as a possible source of exposure.
- Interview the case-patient (parent/guardian if case-patient is a minor) via phone using the *Risk Factors* section within the CDRSS case. Do not fax this information to the physician or mail to the home of the case-patient for completion.
- Provide education to the case-patient; additional information can be found on the NJDOH and CDC disease pages.
- Review CDRSS for routine updates from the FWD Unit on status of specimen collection and submission to CDC through PHEL.
- Update CDRSS with clinical status, including hospitalization details, symptom progression, and date of discharge.
- Review the CDRSS case for final results updated by the FWD unit, based on CDC testing.
- Determine *Case Status* based on [NNDSS case definitions](#) and mark *Report Status* as “LHD CLOSED” in CDRSS.