



County of Sacramento

BOTULISM ALERT
May 10, 2017

Situational Update

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in collaboration with Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) and neighboring county public health departments, is conducting an investigation to determine possible causes of illness in five patients recently hospitalized with foodborne botulism; an additional patient with suspected foodborne botulism is currently under investigation. Based on preliminary data, the source of their illnesses appears to be prepared food, particularly nacho cheese sauce, from the Valley Oak Food and Fuel gas station in Walnut Grove (Sacramento County). These patients became ill in late April and all had consumed prepared food, including nacho cheese sauce, from this gas station within five days of illness onset. The investigation is ongoing. On May 5, SCPH stopped the sale of prepared food at Valley Oak Food and Fuel gas station. Please see below the actions requested of clinicians at this time:

Actions Requested of All Clinicians:

1. **Report** all patients with suspect botulism to SCPH *immediately* via phone (916) 875-5881 AND electronically via CalREDIE or via confidential fax (916) 854-9709.
2. **Inquire** about exposure to prepared food, particularly nacho cheese sauce, from the Valley Oak Food and Fuel gas station in Walnut Grove, for patients exhibiting botulism symptoms.¹
3. **Collect pre-treatment** specimens and coordinate with SCPH for laboratory testing.
4. **Treat** patient(s) immediately with botulism antitoxin based on compatible clinical presentation. Laboratory confirmation is not required prior to treatment.²

¹ Symptoms usually begin with bilateral cranial nerve signs and symptoms including blurred vision, diplopia (double vision), ptosis (drooping eyelids), dysphagia (trouble swallowing), dysarthria (difficulty speaking), impaired gag reflex, and facial weakness. Progression classically presents as a bilateral and symmetric descending extremity muscle weakness. Fever is usually absent, and patients usually remain alert and responsive with no sensory deficits. Respiratory muscles may become involved with resultant respiratory failure and death, unless prompt recognition and treatment is initiated. Symptoms generally begin 18 to 36 hours after eating a contaminated food or drink, but they can occur as early as 6 hours or as late as 10 days after exposure.

² Botulism antitoxin is only available through the public health department and is the only specific treatment available for the treatment of non-infant botulism. Coordinate with SCPH to obtain the antitoxin.

For more information, please call SCPH Disease Control at (919) 875-5881 Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 5:00pm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olivia Kasirye MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS
Public Health Officer