

Botulism Testing & Shipping Requirements

Important

This testing requires MDH Epi pre-approval

- Contact Infectious Disease Epidemiology Prevention and Control (IDEPC) at (651) 201-5414 or (877) 676-5414 **before** requesting this testing.
- Once cleared by Epi, **you must notify the MDH-PHL Laboratory prior to shipping samples** (On-call : 612-282-3723) and provide tracking information and delivery date.

Packaging & Shipping

- Collect and transport clinical samples in sterile, leak-proof containers.
- Leave foods in their original containers, if possible, or place in sterile leak-proof, unbreakable containers. Place each container in a separate sealed plastic bag to prevent cross-contamination during shipping. Label completely.
- Ship by the most rapid means available.
- Store and ship specimens in anaerobic transport systems (if available) at room temperature.
- If anaerobic transport systems are not available, store and ship specimens at 4°C.
- Freezing should be avoided as it decreases recovery of *C. botulinum* and may decrease toxin activity.
- If a delay of more than several days cannot be avoided, freeze samples for storage and ship frozen.

Suspected **Foodborne** Botulism

(1 year of age and older)

	Acceptable Specimens	Volume	Comments	Toxin (T) or Culture (C)	
Preferred Specimen Type	Serum	5 mL	Less than 5 mL results in incomplete testing	T	
	Gastric contents	20 mL	Anaerobic transport system	T	C
	Vomit	20 mL	Anaerobic transport system	T	C
	Stool	25-50 g (walnut-size)	Collect before anti-toxin treatment administration	T	C
	Sterile water enema	Collect using minimal water volume	Collect before anti-toxin treatment administration	T	C

Other sample types

Implicated consumed food – commercial or home-prepared

- Leave foods in their original containers or transfer to sterile, leak-proof containers. Empty containers with remnants of food are acceptable.

Unopened home-prepared food from batch consumed by patient

- Leave foods in their original containers.

Unopened commercial products

- Products are referred immediately to the FDA.



Suspected **Infant Botulism**
(0-12 months old)

	Acceptable Specimens	Volume	Comments	Toxin (T) or Culture (C)	
Preferred Specimen Type	Stool	25-50 g (walnut-size)	Collect before anti-toxin treatment administration	T	C
	Sterile water enema	Collect using minimal water volume	Collect before anti-toxin treatment administration	T	C
	Serum	3 mL	0.5 mL will allow screening; testing will be incomplete	T	
	Rectal Swab		Potentially useful for culture		C

Potential sample types/sources

- Honey, opened formula (unopened commercial products are referred to the FDA.), other foods/liquids fed to the infant.
- **NB: Environmental sampling is discouraged.**

Suspected **Wound** Botulism

	Acceptable Specimens	Volume	Comments	Toxin (T) or Culture (C)	
Preferred Specimen Type	Serum	5 mL	Less than 5 mL may result in incomplete testing	T	
	Wound swab		Anaerobic transport system	C	
	Tissue or exudate		Anaerobic transport system	C	
	Stool	25-50 g (walnut-size)	To rule out foodborne botulism. Collect before anti-toxin treatment administration	T	C

Suspected **Intentional** Toxin Release

Specimens	Comments	Toxin (T) only
Clinical material	Serum, stool, sterile water enema, as above.	T
Food	See <i>Suspected Foodborne Botulism</i> section.	T
Environmental swabs	Send in individual clean, dry containers	T