



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

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Foodborne Botulism Outbreak in Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties

Following an outbreak of botulism linked to cheese sauce on nachos sold at the Valley Oak Food and Fuel gas station in Walnut Grove in Sacramento County, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department is asking providers to be alert for illness suggestive of botulism. To date, no cases related to this outbreak have been reported in San Luis Obispo County.

The cheese sauce was sold up to the afternoon of Friday, May 5. (The sale of all prepared food at this store was stopped on May 6.) Nine cases have been identified to date; additional cases from this exposure may be present through May 19. The Public Health Department asks all clinicians to:

- **Consider** botulism as a differential diagnosis for patients exhibiting blurred vision, diplopia (double vision), ptosis (drooping eyelids), dysphagia (trouble swallowing), dysarthria (difficulty speaking), impaired gag reflex, and/or facial weakness. In infants, botulism can present as weakness, poor feeding, or a hoarse cry.
- **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.
- **Collect** pre-treatment specimens and coordinate with the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department for laboratory testing. For guidance on specimen collection and transport, call 805-781-5500 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) or 805-781-4553 (after hours).
- **Treat** patient with Heptavalent Botulism Antitoxin (HBAT) based on compatible clinical presentation. HBAT can be requested through the California Department of Public Health at 916-328-3605. Laboratory confirmation is not required prior to treatment.
- **Report** all patients with suspected botulism to the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department by phone at 805-781-5500 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) or 805-781-4553 (after hours), and electronically via CalREDIE or by confidential fax to 805-781-5543.

Botulism is a paralytic illness caused by a nerve toxin produced by *Clostridium botulinum*. It can lead to death from respiratory failure. Patients remain alert and responsive with no sensory deficits other than the symptoms described above. If diagnosed early, botulism can be treated with an antitoxin available only through public health departments.

For more information, see www.cdc.gov/botulism or contact Christine Gaiger via the details above.

Public Health Department

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www.slopublichealth.org