



To: Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN) Participants  
Date: September 30, 2006

### **Botulism Cases and Bolthouse Farms Carrot Juice**

Three cases of botulism in Georgia and now a fourth case in Florida have occurred presumably after drinking contaminated carrot juice, prompting health officials to warn that carrot juice must be kept refrigerated. Botulinum toxin type A was found in leftover juice from one of the available bottles of carrot juice.

In response to the cases of botulism being linked to Bolthouse Farms, Bakersfield, California brand carrot juice, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers not to drink Bolthouse Farms Carrot Juice, 450 ml and 1 liter plastic bottles, with "BEST IF USED BY" dates of NOV 11 2006 or earlier. Consumers should discard this product. If your patients ask, please remind them that it is critical to refrigerate carrot juice - including pasteurized carrot juice - for their safety

Botulinum toxin is a nerve poison produced by *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacterium commonly found in soil. Botulism symptoms include double or blurred vision, droopy eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. If the illness is not treated, it can progress to paralysis of the limbs, trunk, and breathing muscles.

Fewer than 200 cases of all forms of botulism are reported annually in the United States. All forms of botulism result from absorption of botulinum toxin into the circulation from either a mucosal surface (gut, lung) or a wound. Cases of botulism from processed food are extremely rare in the U.S. The FDA said about 24 cases of foodborne botulism are reported in the United States each year, on average.

If you suspect botulism in the patient you are evaluating immediately call Community Epidemiology. Botulism antitoxin may be released if appropriate.

Thank you for your continued participation.

Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN)  
County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency  
Community Epidemiology Branch