

Department of Disease Control

Weekly Disease Forecast No.160_Foodborne Botulism (13 – 19 May 2018)

From the national disease surveillance system, during 1997 – 2014, the Department of Disease Control reveals 9 botulism incidents with 277 cases of which 3 died. Most of the incidents were found in the Northern region.

One incident with botulism deaths was reported in Nan province with 13 patients of which 2 died. The cause was from eating unboiled canned bamboo shoots (normai peep) stored at high temperature. The other incident found in Saraburi province had resulted in 3 patients of which one died. The cause was from eating improperly processed pork sausage (mooyor) without reheating.



According to this week disease forecast, foodborne botulism is likely to occur sporadically due to traditional household and small scale community food processing that may lead to contamination of the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum* toxins.

Foodborne botulism is caused by consuming foods contaminated with botulinum toxins that block nerve functions and can lead to muscular and respiratory paralysis. The heat stable spores of this bacteria can be found in soil, water, and even in the intestinal tracts of fish and mammals. In the absence of oxygen, the spores germinate, grow and then excrete the heat labile toxins. The symptoms start with gastrointestinal tract disorder such as nausea, vomit, stomachache and diarrhea. Neurological symptoms, usually appear within 12 to 36 hours, include blurred vision, difficulty in swallowing and speaking. The mortality rate is high due to respiratory muscle paralysis, therefore prompt diagnosis and appropriate, immediate treatment, i.e. early administration of botulinum antitoxin and intensive respiratory care are urgently needed.

It is generally believed that botulism is caused only by eating canned bamboo shoots. However, after the safer food production of home-canned bamboo shoots has been monitored, the botulism incident from this food product has not occurred in the country since 2007.

The Department of Disease Control emphasizes that botulism toxins can be found in a variety of foods in closed anaerobic packages including improperly processed canned foods, pork sausage, rotten beans, and bamboo shoots kept in plastic bags, and bottled pickled crabs. Therefore, for safety, all of these foods must be adequately reheated before consuming.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hotline 1422



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