

Two botulism illnesses linked to temperature-abused soup

In 2006 six people in GA, FL and Ontario developed botulism that was eventually traced to carrot juice. As a result, one individual died. Temperature abuse of the juice was a factor in the illnesses.



People don't always read labels or follow instructions

A 29-year-old Ohio man and a 41-year-old Georgia woman became ill in January 2011 after eating a commercially produced potato soup that contained *Clostridium botulinum* toxin. Each was purchased refrigerated from retailers and labeled "Keep refrigerated." After holding the product unrefrigerated for days, both individuals developed botulism symptoms after consuming the soup.

Each required long-term hospitalization and were placed on ventilators after experiencing symptoms including dizziness, blurred vision, and difficulty



In one case, the soup had been purchased in December, from the refrigerated section of a local grocer, but had been kept unrefrigerated in the victim's home for 42 days. In the other, the victim had held soup at room temperature for 18 days.

The dangerous botulism-causing toxin forms when *Clostridium botulinum* spores are allowed to germinate and then grow in a low-acid food without oxygen held at room temperature. Since these soups were not processed to kill *Clostridium botulinum* spores, the only control measure for botulism was keeping the product refrigerated.

What you can do:

- if you sell foods that require refrigeration for safety, clearly and repeatedly communicate this to your customers

- know which of your foods have to be refrigerated; check labels of incoming ingredients and follow instructions

- monitor your cooler/refrigerator temperatures to ensure they are below 41°F

