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BOTULISM HEALTH UPDATE AND RABID BAT FOUND IN SAN FRANCISCO January 28, 2008

This Health Update provides information on botulism notification, testing, and management. It also reminds clinicians that rabid bats are in San Francisco and provides links to resources on rabies. This update is posted on the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) website at <http://www.sfdph.org/healthalert>.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF ALL CLINICIANS AND LABORATORIANS

1. Notify SFDPH Disease Control immediately at (415)554-2830 of suspected cases of botulism
2. Follow instructions for collecting and submitting specimens for diagnostic testing
3. Consult Disease Control on possible bat exposures and the need for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis

REPORTING

San Francisco clinicians and laboratorians are required by state regulation to immediately notify SFDPH by telephone (415) 554-2830 of every case of suspected botulism. After 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays, follow the prompts to page the on-call communicable disease physician.

OBTAINING TESTING AND TREATMENT

Laboratory testing for botulism and botulinum antitoxin is only available after consultation and approval by the SFDPH and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Clinicians should first call SFDPH to discuss the patient's clinical presentation and risk factors for botulism. If the suspected case meets clinical criteria for botulism, the SFDPH on-call physician will contact the CDPH to arrange for specimen testing and the release of botulinum antitoxin. If botulism is suspected, antitoxin should be administered as soon as possible and should not await lab test results. An updated SFDPH checklist for the diagnosis and management of wound botulism is available at <http://www.sfdcp.com/index.cfm?id=75>.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND TRANSPORT

Specimens should be collected as soon as botulism is suspected and must be collected before antitoxin is administered. Detailed specimen collection instructions are available at <http://www.sfdcp.com/index.cfm?id=75>

Suspect Wound Botulism: Collect 30cc of blood in 3 large (10-12ml) red top tubes. If possible your clinical lab should process the specimens to separate serum from red cells and then submit 15-17cc of clear, non-frozen, non-hemolyzed serum. If the sample cannot be processed, submit 30cc of blood. Ship serum or blood samples with a cold pack. Send only a pre-antitoxin specimen. Do **not** send post-antitoxin sample without prior approval.

For Suspect Foodborne Botulism or Botulism of Unknown Source: Collect serum specimen as described above. If SFDPH requests a fecal specimen, follow specimen collection and transportation instructions at <http://www.sfdcp.com/index.cfm?id=75>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- San Francisco Department of Public Health Botulism Webpage: <http://www.sfdcp.com/index.cfm?id=75>
- Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program: <http://www.infantbotulism.org>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/botulism_g.htm

RABID BAT FOUND IN SAN FRANCISCO

A rabid bat was found in San Francisco on January 5, 2008. Persons who may have had physical contact with the bat were recommended to receive rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). One to five rabid bats have been detected each year in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco. See <http://www.sfdcp.com/index.cfm?id=91> for information about when to consider giving rabies PEP and how to obtain it.