

For Immediate Release:
July 31, 2007

Contact: Deborah Busemeyer, Health Dept.
470-2290
Marissa Stone, Environment Dept.
827-0314, 231-0475

State Urges People to Discard Products Connected to Botulism Outbreak Department of Health Investigates Possible Botulism Case in NM

(Santa Fe) -- The New Mexico Department of Health is investigating a possible case of botulism in a 52-year-old Sandoval County man who is hospitalized in Albuquerque. The Department of Health is working to confirm the botulism diagnosis and determine whether the patient ate any of the products associated with the national outbreak.

Due to possible contamination with the toxin that causes botulism, a number of food products, including certain brands of canned chili sauce, chili, corn beef hash, barbecue beef, barbecue pork, hash, sausage gravy, beef stew and pet food have been recalled. For the entire list of the approximately 90 products, look up: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2007/NEW01670.html> or http://www.castleberrys.com/news_productrecall.asp.

The New Mexico Environment Department and the Albuquerque Environmental Health Department are working with stores in New Mexico to get rid of the products, which include such brands as Krogers, Steak n Shake, Food Club, Gold Star, Lowes and Great Value. If you have these items in your home or business, get rid of them. Don't dump the products in unsecured garbage cans or dumpsters where people could get them. Be careful handling and getting rid of the cans. Botulism poisoning is a serious and potentially deadly illness.

Symptoms of botulism poisoning can begin from six hours to 10 days after eating food that contains the toxin. Symptoms may include double or blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, and muscle weakness that moves progressively down the body. Botulism poisoning can also cause paralysis of the breathing muscles which can result in death.

Seek immediate medical attention if you have these symptoms. Health care providers evaluating persons with signs of botulism should contact the New Mexico Department of Health immediately at 505-827-0006 for 24/7 consultation.

If your pet has consumed some of dog food affected and is showing some of those symptoms, contact your pet's veterinarian.

-- MORE --

Some of the affected products may also be on the shelves of nursing homes, food banks and long-term care facilities. Any organization that serves or distributes canned food products should isolate recalled products from other stock and tag them for pick-up or disposal. Do not puncture or open cans prior to disposal. Contact the New Mexico Environment Department at 505-624-6046 or 505-476-8608 for information on proper disposal of recalled products.

###