

04/29/2024

*\*NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

## CDC HAN 507: Adverse Effects Linked to Counterfeit or Mishandled Botulinum Toxin Injections

### Actions Requested

- Consider the possibility of adverse effects from botulinum toxin injections in patients presenting with localized paralysis.
- Be aware of symptom overlap between the presentation of localized adverse effects from injection of botulinum toxin and the early symptoms of botulism:
  - Assess for symmetry of cranial nerve palsies; symmetrical cranial nerve palsies are expected with botulism.
  - Assess for progression of cranial nerve palsies, possibly followed by a descending symmetric flaccid paralysis. This should raise botulism suspicion.
- Clinicians should **IMMEDIATELY** contact Thurston County Public Health and Social Services if they suspect botulism at 360-786-5470
  - CDC clinical botulism service is available 24/7 at 770-488-7100
- Report adverse events related to the use of any medications, including suspected counterfeit medications, to FDA's [MedWatch Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program](#).
- Never delay treatment pending laboratory confirmation. Presumptive tests for botulism toxin may be complete in one day through the public health laboratory but confirmatory work takes several days.
- Collect serum before administration of antitoxin or botulism immune globulin.
- Hospitalized patients should be placed on standard precautions.

### Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a HAN Health Advisory to alert clinicians about risks of counterfeit or mishandled botulinum toxin injections. CDC, FDA, state, and local partners are investigating clusters of 22 people in 11 U.S. states, including Washington, reporting adverse effects after receiving injections with counterfeit botulinum toxin or injections administered by unlicensed or untrained individuals or in non-healthcare settings, such as homes or spas. Eleven patients were hospitalized, and none have died. When botulinum toxin diffuses around the injection site, it can result in adverse effects. Botulism is the disease caused by botulinum toxin circulating in the blood and producing effects remotely from the injection site.

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UPDATE

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SECTION  
THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
412 LILLY RD NE  
OLYMPIA, WA, 98506-5132  
DISEASE REPORTING: (360)786-5470  
[WWW.THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PHSS](http://WWW.THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PHSS)



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## Resources

- [Washington State Department of Health Guideline](#)
- [CDC HAN Health Advisory 507](#)
- [FDA Counterfeit Alert](#)
- [Information for Healthcare Professionals](#)

## THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting <b>non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day)</b> : <a href="#">Reporting a Notifiable Condition (thurstoncountywa.gov)</a>	Phone: <b>360-786-5470</b> Fax: 1-833-418-1916
<b>Day time immediately reportable conditions</b> – Calls are answered during business hours Monday-Friday 8am-5pm (excluding holidays) and routed to the appropriate communicable disease team member.	Phone: 360-867-2610 Secure eFax: 1-833-418-1916
<b>After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health & Social Services and condition is <b>immediately notifiable or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: [Communicable Disease Updates \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](#)