

October 6, 2006

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FROM:

Eileen De Villa, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCP(C)
Associate Medical Officer of Health

Introduction

On September 30, 2006, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) issued a public warning not to drink certain brands of carrot juice due to concerns about botulism. Two potential cases are under investigation in Toronto.

The following products are affected by this alert:

1. Bolthouse Farms 100% Carrot Juice, sold in both 1 liter and 450 milliliter sizes
2. Earthbound Farm Organic Carrot Juice, sold in both 1 liter and 450 milliliter sizes
3. President's Choice Organics 100% Pure Carrot Juice, sold in both 1 liter and 450 milliliter sizes

Products bearing "BEST BY" OR BEST IF USED BY "BIUB" dates of 06NO11 (NOV 11 2006) or earlier are affected.

Botulism

Human food-borne botulism is a serious but relatively rare intoxication caused by ingestion of preformed toxins produced by *Clostridium botulinum* (*C. botulinum*).

Symptoms

- The onset of symptoms is from 12-36 hours after infection.
- Early symptoms range from fatigue, weakness, dizziness, followed by dry mouth and difficulty in swallowing and speaking. Vomiting, diarrhea, constipation and swelling may occur.
- The toxin is a nerve poison that can cause a descending paralysis.
- Treatment involves IV botulinum antitoxin.

Please consider botulism in the differential diagnosis for individuals exhibiting these symptoms and report suspected cases to Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700.

For information on botulism, submission of samples for laboratory analysis, and obtaining botulism antitoxin visit:
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/pub/disease/botulism.html>

For more information on the carrot juice recall visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency web site at www.inspection.gc.ca.

Are you a Mississauga family physician with an interest in infection control?

The Mississauga Halton Regional Infection Control Network Steering Committee is seeking nominations for a Family Medicine representative. The Mississauga Halton Network is one of the Regional Networks for Infection Control and Communicable Diseases initiated across the province by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The mandate of this committee is to maximize coordination and integration of activities related to the prevention, surveillance and control of infectious diseases across all health care sectors. If you are interested or wish to nominate a candidate please contact:

Melanie Gillespie
Physician Outreach Specialist
Region of Peel
(905)791-7800, Ext 2593
melanie.gillespie@peelregion.ca

Deadline for nomination: October 31, 2006.

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Avian Influenza Vaccine

On July 26, 2006, the pharmaceutical company GlaxosmithKline (GSK) released results that a vaccine against avian influenza is in development and early trials have been successful in promoting immunity in healthy adults ages 18-60 years. This vaccine is said to be protective for humans against influenza type H5N1 (avian influenza). While these early trials suggest that this vaccine may be protective for humans against influenza type H5N1, further studies are required. The efficacy of this vaccine against a mutated pandemic influenza strain is also unknown.

GSK will begin clinical trials soon to study the cross-protection ability of this vaccine to variant strains of the H5N1 strain. H5N1 is a novel influenza type A virus strain that has infected 236 people worldwide with 138 deaths, as of August 9, 2006. There is no proven scientific evidence that the virus spreads between humans.