

**Do not feed honey to infants under 1 year old**

**~Be cautious of infant botulism~**

To prevent infant botulism, avoid feeding infants under 1 year old foods that may be contaminated with botulinum spores, including honey.

In February this year, there was a case of infant botulism in Tokyo, presumed to be caused due to feeding of honey. Infant botulism is a disease inherent in infants younger than 1 year old, which very rarely occurs. Botulinum spores \* ingested orally germinate and proliferate in the intestinal tract of infants, as they develop and generate toxins.

Symptoms are caused by paralysis due to relaxation of muscles, characterized by constipation lasting for several days, muscle weakness, poor suckling, and quieter crying voice, etc. In severe cases, breathing difficulties may occur.

As *Clostridium botulinum* exists in the state of spores and is widely present in the environment, there is a possibility that some food may have been contaminated by the transition from the environment.

In October 1987, the Ministry of Health and Welfare of that time issued a notice to take attention to the public, since then, the number of these cases due to honey has decreased.

\* What are Spores?

Some particular bacteria such as botulinum form spores in an environment which is not suitable for their growth. Spores have high resistance to heat and dryness. In order to kill the spores, it is necessary to sterilize with heat at 120°C for at least 4 minutes or longer. At around 100°C, it cannot be sterilized even if heated for a long time.

**Related Links**

- [Clostridium botulinum](#) (Guide to Food Sanitation | Bureau of Social Welfare and Public Health, Tokyo Metropolitan Government)
  - [Food Sanitation for Infants](#) (Guide to Food Sanitation | Bureau of Social Welfare and Public Health, Tokyo Metropolitan Government)
- [Infant Botulism](#)
- [Botulism](#) (Tokyo Metropolitan Infectious Disease Surveillance Center | Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Public Health)