

# Botulism Confirmation Testing

## Additional Laboratory Recommendations for Specimen Collection, Storage, and Shipping

[Review the botulism confirmation test order \(http://bitly.ws/zH3n\)](http://bitly.ws/zH3n) for proper specimen collection, handling, and shipping instructions.

This document provides public health professionals and hospital staff additional recommendations for collecting, documenting, and shipping specimens to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for botulism confirmation testing.

Ship specimens to CDC only *after* clinical consultation and the administration of [BabyBIG](#) or [botulinum antitoxin \(BAT\)](#). [Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program](#). For consultations, contact the at the California Department of Public Health (510-231-7600, 24/7) and the [Clinical Emergency Botulism Service](#) at CDC (770-488-7100, 24/7).

## Collecting specimens

### Stool

- Collect 10 g of stool, if possible (a minimum of 0.5-1.0 g may be tested).
  - » Ideally, collect stool before treatment with BabyBIG or BAT.
- Enemas may be tested only if they are obtained using non-bacteriostatic water.
  - Promptly refrigerate specimen after collection.
- Stool specimens must be shipped *and* received at CDC **within 3 days of collection**.
  - » Stool specimens received later than 3 days after collection will be rejected.

### Serum



- Serum specimens must be collected **before treatment with BAT**.
  - » Serum collected after BAT treatment cannot be tested.
- Collect 5 mL, if possible (a minimum of 1.0 mL may be tested), using a no-additive or serum tube.
- Promptly refrigerate specimen after collection.
- Do not send whole blood to CDC – whole blood cannot be tested.
- Serum specimens must be shipped *and* received at CDC **within 20 days of collection**.

### Bacterial cultures

- Only **chopped meat glucose starch** broth or **chopped meat glucose** broth can be accepted.
- Bacterial cultures must be shipped *and* received at CDC **within**
  - » **15 days of inoculation when stored at room temperature** (15°C–25°C), or
  - » **30 days of inoculation when stored refrigerated** (2°C–8°C).

### Foods

- Foods should be left in their original containers or placed in a sterile, non-breakable container.
- Empty containers with food remnants can be tested.
- Promptly refrigerate foods after collection.

## Documenting specimens

- **Each specimen sent to CDC must be accompanied by a [CDC 50.34 Specimen Submission Form \(Form 50.34 http://bitly.ws/zH2q\)](#).**
  - » *Can't download the form? Contact CDC's IT Help Desk at 404-639-6000.*
  - » CDC does not accept handwritten copies of Form 50.34.
  - » Information listed on Form 50.34 and the primary specimen container must match. Missing or discrepant information may result in specimen rejection or a delay in testing.



- On each specimen's Form 50.34, the following information is required:
  - » Test order name (Botulism Laboratory Confirmation) and test order code (CDC-10132)
  - » Patient name and birth date
  - » Specimen collected date
  - » Specimen source (type)
    - For enemas, select "Stool" (not stool suspension)
    - For serum, select "Serum" (not blood)
  - » Institution name, street address, point of contact (POC) name, POC phone, and POC e-mail.  
*For submitter and original submitter (e.g., the state laboratory and the clinical laboratory)*
- On each specimen's container, the following information is required:
  - » Patient name and birth date
- For bacterial cultures, the culture tube and Form 50.34 must have the inoculation date of the culture, not the collection date of the primary specimen.

## Packaging specimens

- Pack specimens properly. [CDC's illustrated storage and shipping guide](http://bitly.ws/zGZV) (<http://bitly.ws/zGZV>)
- Make sure specimens arrive at CDC at the correct temperature. Specimens received outside of the required temperature ranges cannot be tested.
  - » Stool and serum specimens *must* arrive at CDC at 2°C–8°C. (See illustration on page 4 of the storage and shipping guide.)
  - » Bacterial cultures may arrive at 2°C–8°C or 15°C–25°C. (See illustration on page 5 of the storage and shipping guide.)
  - » Specimens that arrive frozen cannot be tested. To prevent freezing, use cold packs instead of dry ice for shipping.
  - » Foods should be shipped with cold packs.
- Make sure each specimen is accompanied by a Form 50.34.



## Shipping specimens

- Label packages correctly.
  - » Packages must have proper labeling for biological hazards: **UN3373 biological substance, Category B.**
  - » Ship to the following address:

CDC Shipping Address	CDC Points of Contact (POC)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention RDSB/STATT Unit 26 1600 Clifton Road, NE Atlanta, GA 30329	<b>Carolina Lúquez</b> (404) 639-0896 fry6@cdc.gov  <b>Janet Dykes</b> (404) 639-3625 jkd1@cdc.gov

- Schedule packages to arrive at CDC on Monday–Friday during the hours of 7:00 am–2:00 pm Eastern Time.
  - » CDC does not accept packages outside of business hours, on weekends, or on federal holidays.
  - » Be aware that some shipping providers/couriers have modified services in observance of holidays.
  - » If possible, use guaranteed next day delivery, and schedule packages to arrive the next business morning.
- Send an email to the CDC POC with the shipping company, shipped date, and package tracking number.

## More Information

- [Get answers to commonly asked questions](http://bitly.ws/zH35) (<http://bitly.ws/zH35>)
- [Learn how to avoid time-consuming errors](http://bitly.ws/zH3e) (<http://bitly.ws/zH3e>)