

Lab Scientist Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Do we need to collect serum for testing?

A: **No.** Infant serum is not routinely tested by our laboratory for diagnosing infant botulism. However, there may be special circumstances when serum will be requested.

Q: Can a fecal specimen for botulism testing be collected after BabyBIG® (Botulism Immune Globulin Intravenous [Human], BIG-IV) has been administered?

A: **Yes.** BabyBIG® does not neutralize botulinum toxin present in the lumen of the intestine, nor does it kill or prevent the growth of *C. botulinum* or inhibit the formation of botulinum toxin in the infant's large intestine. For these reasons, a diagnostic fecal specimen can be collected either before or after BabyBIG® administration.

Q: Do we need to store fecal specimens in a freezer prior to shipping or ship specimens on dry ice?

A: **No.** Do not freeze specimens at any time.

Q: Does my laboratory need to pay for shipping the specimen to IBTPP?

A: **Yes.** The submitting institution is responsible for paying the shipping costs when sending a specimen to IBTPP for infant botulism diagnostic testing.

Q: How much does this laboratory test cost?

A: There is no charge for this service by the California Department of Public Health.

Q: How long does it take to receive results?

A: Direct toxin results are often, but not always, available the morning following receipt of the specimen. Results of the stool culture for *C. botulinum* may take as little as one-week or as long as one-month to complete and varies from case to case. IBTPP will notify the patient's physician by phone as soon as the direct toxin results are available. A final report is issued once the full analysis is complete; this report is sent to the submitting laboratory.

Q: Does my clinical laboratory need to route infant fecal specimens through our local public health laboratory before they are submitted to IBTPP?

A: **For California patients only: No.** Always send infant fecal specimens directly to IBTPP. **Please note:** Laboratory testing will be conducted only on those specimens that have been previously authorized for such by IBTPP physicians. Specimens sent to the IBTPP laboratory will not be tested until the patient's physician has consulted with an on-call IBTPP physician.

For all other states: Contact your health department for instructions on how to submit specimens.

Q: Do I need to include an IBTPP specimen submission form with the diagnostic fecal specimen?

A: **For California patients only: Yes.** You must include the **Infant Botulism Diagnostic Testing Specimen Submission Form** with all fecal specimens submitted to IBTPP for testing. A link to this form (PDF-fillable) may be found on the Infant Botulism Laboratory and Diagnostic Information page of this website. All fields of this form must be completed.

For states in which diagnostic testing is performed at CDC: The CDC-specific Specimen Submission Form may be found on their website.