



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health - Men's & Children's Health Section

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Michael F. Easley, Governor

Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

April 5, 2002

CACFP 02-16

MEMORANDUM

TO: Institutions Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

FROM: Arnette Cowan, MS, RD, LDN
Head, Special Nutrition Programs

SUBJECT: Potential Health Hazards of Commodity Honey and Infant Botulism (226.20-18)

In certain circumstances such as agricultural surpluses, the Food and Nutrition Service may distribute honey as a bonus commodity in the Food Distribution Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Food Distribution Program, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and the Emergency Food Assistance Program. Some of the potential users of commodity honey in these programs would be children under the age of one.

Although the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not require a warning statement on the label, state agencies and local outlets of honey are alerted to the honey's potential danger to infants.

Infant botulism is a special form of botulism that affects only babies under the age of one. Infant botulism and honey have been definitively linked by both laboratory and epidemiological studies.

First recognized in 1976, this type of botulism is caused by the ingestion of C. botulism spores which colonize and produce toxin in the intestinal tract of infants. Of the various potential environmental sources such as soil, cistern water, dust and foods, honey is the one dietary reservoir of C. botulism spores linked thus far to infant botulism. As the result of greater awareness by health officials, the number of botulism cases has increased since its recognition in 1976. It is now internationally recognized, with cases being reported in more countries.

If you have questions, please contact your regional consultant.

AC/ERB/clg

cc: SNP Staff
Auditors

