

Caring for rare case of infant botulism

Banner Thunderbird providing life-saving care to 12-month-old boy



Cole Hansberger, 12 months old, is recovering from infant botulism

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GLENDALE, Ariz. (Aug. 22, 2017) – One-year-old Cole Hansberger is fighting to regain his health in the pediatric intensive care unit at [Banner Thunderbird Medical Center](#) after falling ill on Aug. 5 with infant botulism, a rare but potentially life-threatening illness.

The majority of cases of infant botulism are from ingestion of botulinum spores from the environment, but can also be transmitted from some foods, like raw honey. In Cole's case, the spores are suspected of coming from dust and soil near their north Peoria home.

Symptoms often include constipation, shortly followed by weakness, feeding difficulties, drooling, anorexia, irritability and weak cry.

Infants are susceptible to infant botulism in the first year of life, with more than 90 percent of cases occurring in infants younger than six months. The fact that Cole was diagnosed at 12 months makes his case even more unusual, doctors say.

Cole's parents suspected something was wrong when their son began having trouble holding his head up and acting lethargic. After symptoms worsened, they brought him to a local hospital emergency room, which then transferred him to Banner Thunderbird, which specializes in pediatric care.

Cole is currently receiving intense treatment and is on a ventilator in Banner Thunderbird's PICU as clinicians work around the clock to provide him the therapy and medications he needs to regain his health. Meanwhile, his parents want to help educate other parents on the signs and symptoms of infant botulism to ensure that they get their children to the hospital as quickly as possible should they suspect something is wrong.

Banner Thunderbird Medical Center in Glendale, Arizona, specializes in heart care, surgical services, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency care, behavioral health, cancer care, rehabilitation and pediatrics including the West Valley's only pediatric intensive care unit, pediatric Emergency department and Level III neonatal intensive care unit. The hospital is part of Banner Health, a nonprofit health system with 28 hospitals in six states. For more information, please visit www.BannerHealth.com/Thunderbird.

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