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On Drugs and Therapeutics

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IN BRIEF

Heptavalent Botulism Antitoxin

The FDA has approved the use of an equine heptavalent botulism antitoxin (BAT, Cangene Corporation). The new antitoxin includes antibodies against all 7 botulinum neurotoxin types (A-G). A human-derived antitoxin (*BabyBIG*) has been available for years for infant botulism. The heptavalent product is now the preferred antitoxin for adult botulism. It is a solution of immunoglobulin fragments obtained from equine plasma that has gone through several steps of purification and viral inactivation. (The use of immunoglobulin fragments reduces side effects compared to intact immunoglobulin.) BAT is available from the CDC through state and local health departments.

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