

Five in intensive care in France after suspected pesto poisoning

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Five people were receiving emergency care in the French city of Tours on Tuesday with suspected botulism after ingesting a pesto sauce made with wild garlic, local authorities said.

Authorities were trying to locate some 600 containers with the same sauce before they are consumed, the prefect of the Indre-et-Loire department southwest of Paris said.

Two couples went to [hospital](#) on Saturday, and a fifth person on Sunday, after a birthday meal that they all attended, and were currently receiving emergency attention in hospital.

They were on respirators but conscious, prefect Patrice Latron told reporters.

Botulism is a rare and serious neurological illness, brought on by a toxin that causes breathing problems, muscle paralysis and, in up to 10 percent of cases, death.

Eating food contaminated with the [toxin](#)—usually because of improper processing—is the most common way to contract the illness.

On the basis of available information, the prefect said, a locally-produced pesto sauce called "O P'tits Oignons" was the source of the infections. The sauce is usually sold during local festivities or fairs between March and September.

"People who bought the same sauce must throw it out, destroy it," Latron said.

In a previous high-profile case last year, 16 customers in a Bordeaux restaurant were believed to have contracted the illness after eating home-preserved sardines. One woman died after eating the sardines.

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